

CHANGING PATTERNS
IN SOUTH ASIA

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by Ian Thomson

Asia has changed beyond recognition in the 16 years since the last war—a period which has seen the virtual end of western rule and the establishment of Communism in China—and it is changing still.

Anybody considering the scene must wonder what precisely are the powerful forces at work, and where they are leading Asia.

Ian Thomson was born in China and has spent years working and travelling in the East, the last time being in 1958. He therefore has unusual qualifications for the task of evaluating the present trends. He first looks at what he believes are the strongest motives behind these trends: nationalism, racialism, idealism. The first factor is the most obvious; but the second is more all-embracing—today it is the combination of pride, the memory of past injuries and the feeling that the West's supremacy is punctured. Idealism is not too high a word to describe the zest and hope that accompany—and follow—the struggles for freedom.

Separate chapters are devoted to the specifically political elements—democracy, communism, socialism; there is a fascinating study of Revolution, and the different forms it has taken in Asia; and Thomson's chapter on Asian internationalism, the chief spirit of Bandung, will be recognized as of great importance. The latter part of this survey is an account of the present standing and organization in Asia of four religions—Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Islam, its influence stretching from West Africa to Southeast Asia, is a great barrier to Communism and possibly

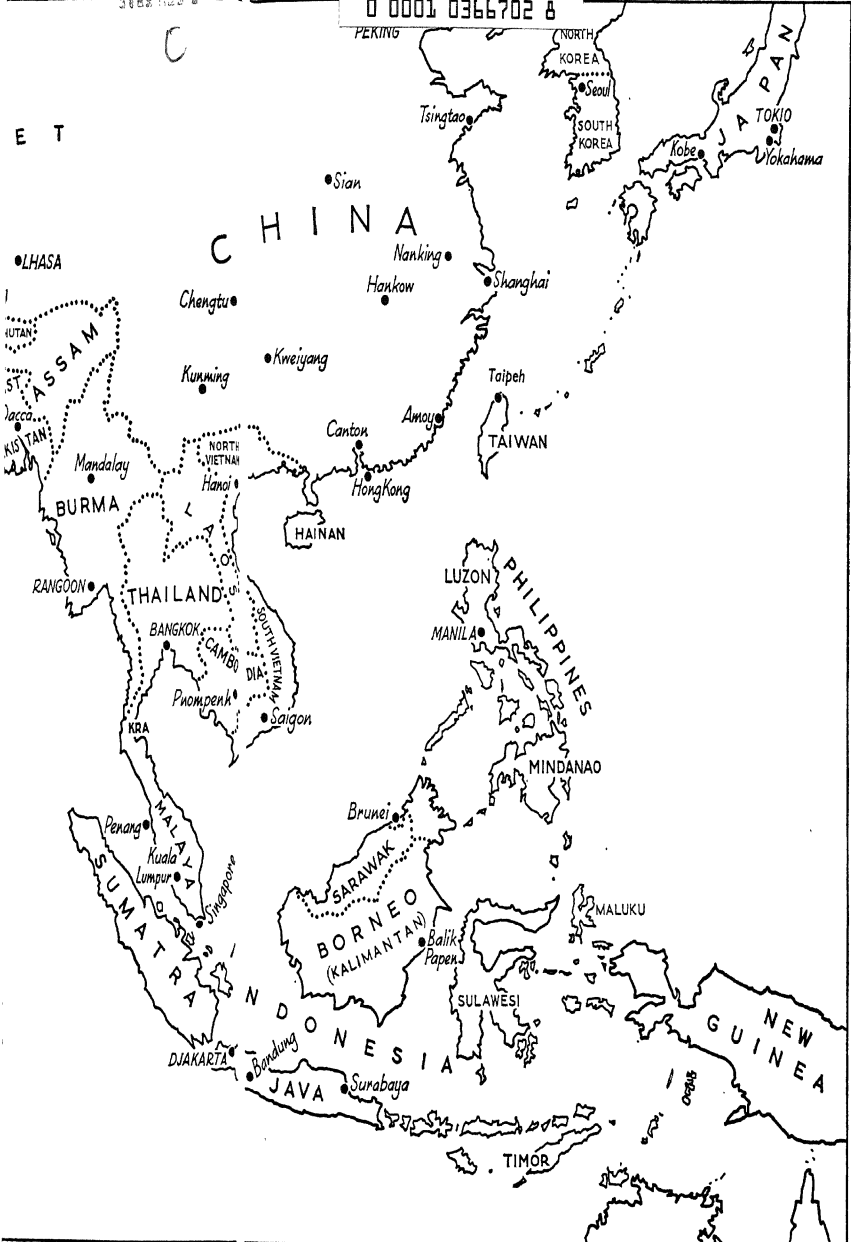
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CHANGING PATTERNS IN SOUTH ASIA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE RISE OF MODERN ASIA



At Djakarta. The author with (*left*) Dr. Marantika and (*centre*) Dr. Leimena, Deputy Prime Minister of Indonesia.

Changing Patterns in South Asia

IAN THOMSON

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TO MY WIFE

FOR HER PATIENCE AND HELP

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I owe a debt of gratitude which can never be repaid to countless kind friends, and relatives with whom I have stayed in south Asia. On them must have fallen the burden to which my daughter referred when she exclaimed: 'Daddy, you've written another book without being a burden to the family.'

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INTRODUCTION

Travelling in a local bus across country from Bandung to Bogor in West Java recently, I heard the old fable:

The East Wind said to the West Wind one day: 'Do you think you can blow that bird off the branch?' West Wind began to blow, but the harder he blew the more the bird gripped. 'You try,' he said in disgust. East Wind blew ever so gently until the bird relaxed its grip, and then gave a sudden puff and the bird flew off.

The two winds are still blowing with varying intensity and in widely separated areas of South and South-East Asia. From time to time a country has to tighten its grip and weather a stiffening breeze or even a storm. It is part of life, Nature's test, and a continuing challenge.

This, in picturesque phraseology, is one of the contemporary patterns in Asia today—an Asia still in transition, making what it can of new opportunities, with rival political ideologies bidding for recruits, individual and national. The patterns are changing all the time, from the Persian Gulf to the Pacific. Patterns of life that were once just typically Eastern or Oriental or Asian, and which partly for that reason have intrigued and fascinated the Westerner, have been challenged by new ideas and pressures. Where is it all heading? Where will it end? These are the absorbing questions.

The patterns are so many, so complicated and shifting, that it is unwise to rush in with quick judgments and premature generalizations. Yet in 1961, over fifteen years after the most global war in history, it should be time to begin to identify and evaluate the major driving forces that mould the present in Asia, and particu-

larly in this book South Asia, even if it is too early to speculate how they will emerge in the future.

The purpose of this book is no more than to try to collect together some of the most dynamic of these factors, to see what each means or can mean, and, if possible, fathom some of the emotional, incentive or ideological power that is inherent in each.

South Asia is used in the loose geographical sense, from Pakistan to Indonesia, though occasionally, for reasons of explanation and contrast, one has had to cast an eye beyond.

The divisions of the book speak for themselves, but may need some defence. We begin with three general chapters, on nationalism, racialism, and idealism. The last of these may come as a surprise, yet I am convinced, by experience of travel and contact, study and reflection, that there is more of this quality—be it offered as aspiration, blue-print, zeal or anything else lofty and compelling—than is generally recognized. The thoughtful Asian is out to build, and somewhere in his mind is high hope of a better order.

In the next section we pass to the more political factors at work: first, the two main contending attitudes and philosophies, democracy and Communism; then to Socialism, distinct from either of the others. The following chapter, revolution, may be another surprise to some readers, but revolution is part and parcel of the emotionalism, technique, and in some cases the reputation of certain countries in South Asia. The increasing post-war conviction of international interdependence and obligation, deeper than ever before, deserves a chapter on its own. Though we are primarily concerned with the trends in South Asia, these trends have to be seen within the compass of a wider whole, and most Asian nations are both well aware of the global perspective, are themselves thinking in big terms, and realize that internationalism implies a world opinion about rights and wrongs.

The third section concerns itself with religion, and no book on South Asia would dare omit reference to the direct and indirect influence of various religions on the life and practice of the people of that populated quarter of the globe. Numerically, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Mohammedism are foremost, but Christianity is added, not merely because the author accepts Christianity as a unique revelation and the highest form of truth known to man, but also because Christianity has now rooted itself widely and deeply in South Asia, and is likely to spread.

Lastly, and in many ways much the most difficult, has been the task of seeing how these various factors contribute towards a focus

or perspective, from which we begin to deduce a prospect. Personalities and problems interact upon each other, men moulding movements and movements conversely modifying men.

At the time of writing, strange twists of Fortune have recently occurred and may become more firmly established. Communism has lost some of its mesmeric appeal, and the respect and awe which used to characterize an uninformed public have been dulled by experience and time. Democracy has stayed the course more successfully than the pessimists expected. Neutrality, as a principle, is still a workable policy, and forms of mild dictatorship are now sprinkled generously over the area, and South Asia is working out carefully its own brand of authoritarianism.

In other words, we have just about reached the stage in the 1960s when, after years of struggle and turmoil, nation after nation is patently and patiently reverting to type in one way or another. Many of the sturdiest features from time-honoured civilizations are beginning to break surface again, and demand or crave to be noticed. Old traditions and customs, new thought and old superstitions, jostle each other for consideration, and the patterns in South Asia, as they change, are more contemporary, more hopeful and more Asian.

PART I GENERAL

CHAPTER 1

Nationalism

Nationalism is the spirit of a nation, however expressed. Like blood, it varies in temperature. It is the life-blood of new nations, a mixture of patriotism, pride and political programme. In its nobler manifestations, nationalism is re-creative, positive, and dynamic. At worst it can degenerate into a fever, racking a nation with debilitating tossings and turnings. No single definition can adequately convey its power, its range of operation, or the fact that it can be at one and the same time a nation's greatest strength and its greatest liability. Nevertheless, it is the factor beyond all others that accounts for the general reawakening of life in Asia, and harbours the seeds of renaissance.

It has had a chain reaction back and forth across the continent of Asia, and there is now no region that has not tingled with this emotion or surrendered to its tremendous demands.

Anyone who knew the previous era in Asia, roughly speaking up to the Second World War, and can now contrast it with the Asian nations of today will testify to an entirely new outlook and purposefulness. This new attitude of hope and endeavour is expressing itself forcibly in outward changes.

When the foreign rule of the Manchu Dynasty in China came to

an end in the autumn of 1911, nationalism scored its first notable success. Millions of Chinese men cut off their pigtailed to celebrate the break with the past, and Sun Yat-sen was the father of this nationalist revolution.

When monks blew conch-shells in Delhi at midnight on 14th August 1947 to celebrate India's passing from British rule to complete constitutional independence, nationalism had won another resounding victory. Mahatma Gandhi was the father-figure behind this one.

Indonesia also had declared its independence in 1945, and in quick succession over the next decade a host of nations followed suit, until in April 1955 they foregathered in collective jubilation and conference in the beautiful setting of Bandung in the hill country of West Java.

For years and years a sullen and injured pride had been smouldering away in most of Asia, a negative attitude of resentment, peevishness, and loss of face. But bit by bit this negative force converted itself into the positive power we call nationalism, the compelling urge of self-vindication. Once aroused, it knew no bounds, and could nowhere be satisfied until it had run through all the stages of agitation, rebellion, liberation, and justification. It has been a long and troublesome period of history, especially in the last forty years, and the end is not yet, but at least it is possible to pick out a number of the common factors in the process, and realize that here is an impulsive momentum approaching full flood.

In the early days of the struggle, when nationalism was an embryonic influence in most countries, everything seemed to depend on a few popular heroes, whose constant utterances were meat and drink to thirsty multitudes easily led. These lone voices soon became national mouthpieces, and the glare of publicity centred on an *élite* few. Whatever they said had a dramatic impact on an otherwise inarticulate following. These were the pioneer days of individual courage. A man like Mahatma Gandhi could call for a boycott or a one-day strike, and a single clarion call with practically no organizational support behind it could affect the outlook and activities of an entire sub-continent. Gandhi had only to embark on a hunger strike and pit his will against the anxiety of others to hold authority to ransom. He was a past-master in the art of blackmail, and all in the interests of his own view of justice, humanity, and idealism. Thus did self-imposed sacrifice produce a hero, and eventually a martyr. Personified in Gandhi, the struggle for freedom soon gave India a craving for political independence which set the pattern for the whole of Asia—and later Africa.

Trained in the Inns of Court in London, fighting for the legal rights of Indians in South Africa, in charge of local welfare work in a district in India, Gandhi had known what it was to aim high, benefit from the kindness of others, fight for others in a good cause, be misunderstood, have to fight back, and gradually come to represent the frustrated aspirations of a people. With his example before them, thousands and thousands of Indians thought nothing of throwing themselves into the same campaign for freedom, whatever the cost to themselves.

Quite a number of young Indians came to Britain—some on public funds—between the two world wars to gain degrees at Oxford, Cambridge, or London. For the first year they were deeply grateful. Life was different in the West and richly new in experience, fresh vision, and opportunity. It took time to digest it all. The second year was different in that delight and gratitude were wearing thin. The student had found his feet and was making his own way. He was beginning to feel his intellectual equality with others, even a feeling that he had done something to catch up with the past. Some Indians had no difficulty in showing their quality academically or athletically. Among my own contemporaries at Oxford were Indians and other Asians who became Presidents of the Union, gained their Blues in sport, and carried off an occasional First-class Honours degree. Some were already born to privilege, being the sons of princely rulers, prime ministers, judges, and senior officials. Their knowledge of the world and affairs, their outward composure and quiet dignity, helped them to sail through their undergraduate days with a confidence which would one day be put to the service of their country in some office of public esteem.

It was in the rooms of such an Indian friend in my own college, Balliol, that I first met Gandhi. Unexpected and unannounced, he had climbed the stone staircase in the inner quad near the porter's lodge and interrupted a private tea-party. He was so quiet, so natural and so friendly that I found it hard to believe that he was the controversial figure that had turned up to the Round Table Conference on the future of India and embarrassed it, the thorn in the British side, the civilized barrister who looked like a hermit. Here was a simple man who refused to go into politics or work his way into leadership in the Central Government through the Congress Party, and yet wielded fantastic personal power over the heads of politicians by some mild reflection or policy statement at his evening prayer-meeting at his *ashram* or even from a prison cell. Here was the frail-looking Hindu of medium caste who professed to admire the teachings of Christ and could turn the principle

of pacifism into the strongest known form of mass revolution short of violence. He could twist patience, resignation, and hope into political weapons second to none. His idealism captured millions, his mystic pragmatism baffled many, and his occasional unreality merely added to the enigma. He was the archetype of nationalism. He knew better than to denounce all that Western civilization had done in Asia, for much of it was altruistic, public-spirited, and enlightened. His was the voice of injured pride, the appeal to wake up and face the challenge of the times, and bring about a new order in India—and, for that matter, in Asia. Something of his spirit subsequently pervaded every liberation movement worthy of the name. He has left his indelible stamp on the first half of the twentieth century. It now remains for the new nations of Asia to gather in the fruits of all that momentum and endeavour and convert the successes of revolution into a new, abiding order of society. By every token of the times, the second half of this century ought to be a period of construction and renaissance.

The third-year Indian undergraduate at Oxford, even before the Second World War, had sometimes reached a pitch of impatience, straining at the leash, itching to be responsible and in control, a perfectly healthy desire at that stage of life. This was particularly true of the students who had 'come up the hard way', not those born to privilege, but those who had got on by merit and hard work alone, often through mission schools, and an Indian university, followed by the award of post-graduate training abroad. Some passed into the Indian Civil Service, that rare breed of 1,200 dedicated and exceptionally talented administrators who gave India an example of workable democracy, wherein justice, integrity, and the will to live together in harmony were the keynotes.

Not all were so high-minded. Some unfortunately vitiated their nationalism with spite, to the detriment of their own character and cause. So anxious were they to speed the processes of change and turn the tables on European influence in Asia that their hopes outstripped their sense of patience. They were prepared to cut off their noses to spite their faces. Their dominant impulse was to see the European at a disadvantage, to injure and humiliate if possible. There is, therefore, inevitably a strong element of revenge in nationalism, far more pernicious than the quality of rivalry or mild resentment. It is an emotion so easily kindled, yet painfully difficult to modulate afterwards. It touches pride at its most sensitive and resistant points, expecting to gain kudos and strength, but the result is often otherwise. Revenge usually brings in its train more problems than it ever solves.

The best recent example of this aspect of nationalism is what happened in Indonesia between 1956 and 1958. In July 1956 President Nasser of Egypt suddenly nationalized the Suez Canal, twelve years in advance of legal right and world expectation. The direct blow to the prestige of France and Britain cannot be underrated. Europe, however imperious in the past, was roundly snubbed, inconvenienced, and grossly humiliated by the single action of one man. Young nations took on fresh courage, for they thought the old giants were falling. Such was the initial impact. It was assumed by some that the dramatic transfer of ownership of the Suez Canal had broken the commercial dependence of the East on the West, and altered the whole balance and relationship. In August 1956, therefore, Indonesia, still finding the Netherlands nursing her wounds over the loss of her Eastern Empire and adamant about reaching agreement in negotiation over outstanding issues, took advantage of the Suez crisis to cancel her debts to Holland. The financial hurt to Holland was enormous, the remaining threads of good faith were just about severed, and Indonesian nationalism was rendered jubilant again at the thought of Dutch indignation and distress. Indonesia had rightly begun to rank as one of the greatest of the new nations of the East because of its vast population and wealth in Sumatra, Java, and hundreds of islands. But the drastic cancellation of financial obligation had far wider repercussions than even the Indonesian Government could foresee at the time. Trust was severely weakened. Antagonism to every lingering trace of Dutch domination became increasingly acute until in December 1957 a wave of bitterness led to ugly scenes in the capital and elsewhere. The writing on the wall this time was unmistakable and final. There was a wholesale exodus of Dutch families from Indonesia, and a take-over in due course of former Dutch-owned businesses and enterprises. The Djakarta Government appealed for moderation and did everything to help the exodus of the retreating Dutch. If this was to be the way new independent nations reacted to sudden favourable changes of circumstance, other nations would naturally be put on their guard, and possibly withhold trust. Goodwill is far more quickly lost than recovered, as Indonesia herself came to realize when she made overtures for closer relationship with neighbours such as Australia two years later. True, nationalism is part of a sound nation's health so long as the concomitants are pride and patriotism, energy and right incentive. But the moment spite and bitterness enter the soul, the nationalism so infected becomes ill-health, redounding not only to discredit, but embarrassing

the nation's friends. It is one of the lessons of history nations are slow to learn.

But the element which the West may describe as 'spite' is regarded in quite different terms by the East—usually as valid and honourable change betokening a new era. Place-names are an easy and obvious example. Batavia was the capital of the former Dutch East Indies. Its name was promptly altered to Djakarta to symbolize the break with the past and the dawn of a new régime when the Republic of Indonesia was established. Streets that had borne the names of illustrious Dutch leaders quickly assumed the names of rebels who had since become national heroes. And so the process spread. Buitenzorg, with its beautiful and famous Botanical Gardens and Governor's palace and charming memorial to Lady (Stamford) Raffles, was renamed Bogor and became President Sukarno's country residence, and so on. In some countries the changes were hasty and wholesale, an emotional desire to eradicate trace—face-saving of the rougher sort. In others it came about very gradually in response to public pressure. In certain countries no radical changes occurred. In Karachi Queen Victoria was still perched on her pedestal years and years after partition, and McCleod Road, one of the main thoroughfares in the great city, was still unaltered. Even in Jerusalem, on the Israel side, King George V Avenue continued to wear its original name. The time will probably come when the impact of Asia upon Asia itself in outward and visible sign will be far more predominant than it now is, and that will be as it should be. But the most virulent and even vindictive nationalism will never be able to obliterate the legacy of the West in terms of big buildings, road systems, harbour development, and other physical tokens of a great constructural age.

The real test of nationalism is over the years. Can it give a nation an inner strength and create a lasting homogeneity? Does it not only arouse and invigorate, but also sustain and consolidate? How far has it survival value, as distinct from revival? Has it dealt with internal crises and ridden a succession of storms and stresses? Does it depend on shortlived influences, the demagoguery of an agitator, the ruthlessness of some bureaucrat, the strong arm of a popped-up general, the idealism of some impracticable theory, or is it broad-based on a sensible pattern of life and supported by a majority will led by responsible leadership? These are a few of the acid tests over the years.

A good example in Asia of the power of nationalism to do its work of making or remaking a nation is the case of Pakistan.

The concept of Pakistan arose out of the communal tension be-

tween Hindus and Muslims in the old India. In spite of every effort to diminish the conflict and generate harmony, the time came when the prospect of continued union was ruled out. One country for the Muslims and one for Hindus was the unhappy basic compromise in a terrible dilemma. Pakistan came off badly. It was formed of two separate parts, geographically far-distant, with 900 miles of India between them. Pakistan had to start with nothing governmental—no established capital, no trained Civil Service, no unity except the vision of an Islamic State, no considerable armed forces, no known mineral wealth or generating power, no commercial security. It was a bleak prospect. The self-confidence in the hearts of citizens was unsubstantiated optimism, game to look difficulties in the face. But the idealism of their poet-philosopher Iqbal, the stubborn will of their founder-President Jinnah, and the guiding hand of the first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, together saw the vision of Pakistan take root, grow apace, and become a fact of history. From then on nationalism played its subtle and overwhelming part. Muslim Indians, now resident or fugitive in Pakistan, began to think of themselves as Pakistanis. The dream of an independent nationality had come true. The educated were quickly enrolled into Government service or found their proper contribution in trade, commerce, the professions, or some other department of the national life. Gaps in the economy were alarmingly wide. Industrial potential was negligible, and the possibility of bankruptcy haunted the future. The growing pains of the new-born nation were serious and troublesome, and cause for much anxiety. Some pessimists prophesied doom. But it was otherwise. Jute factories were built. Coal was imported. Millions of new spindles wove thousands of yards of new cloth. Crises were met by emergency measures. A National Bank was floated to carry responsibility, and the rest of the world was soon left in no doubt as to Pakistan's determination to get quickly on her feet. A few brief bids for leadership in Islamic and Middle East affairs came to nothing, but at least they indicated that here was a new nation with zeal and resilience.

Nationalism saved Pakistan over and over again. It took nine years to frame a Constitution, which even then proved impermanent. A deadlock in Kashmir, where India and Pakistan disagreed strongly over questions of partition and sovereignty and future destiny, whipped up extreme nationalism. Yet another bone of contention arose over the question of sharing the waters of the Indus and its tributaries. Pakistan protested at India's schemes for diverting water for vast irrigation and hydro-electric projects, thus re-

ducing the volume of water that Pakistan had come to expect. Each side blamed the other for misunderstanding, unwillingness to compromise, and aggressive intent. The effect on the Pakistan economy might be serious. It meant that a high proportion of the national revenue had to be spent on building up the armed forces against the eventuality of war, and this in turn increased taxation and diverted large sums of money which should more profitably have been spent on developing the nation's economy, solving the desperate refugee problem and other urgent matters. Yet another danger ensued. The more the military strength of the country grew, the greater the likelihood of a switch of control from the politicians to the Army, and this in turn could alter the complexion of government and the outlook of the nation. In 1958 this happened. Pakistan accepted a General as President, and went the way of many other nations which preferred a degree of military dictatorship, with its sanction of discipline, to the slower and less understood practice of Western democracy. Most Muslim countries—the United Arab Republic (Egypt and Syria), the Lebanon, the Sudan, Iraq, and to a lesser extent Indonesia—had all gone the same way by 1959, and even Buddhist nations like Thailand and Burma, with their theoretical abhorrence of killing, had entrusted themselves to rule by military Prime Ministers. At a time when the Presidents of the United States, France, and Russia were also former Generals or Marshals, it might be said that military experience was the stepping-stone to national leadership. Nationalism is ultimately authoritarian in Asia.

*

Nationalism also reacts quickly to changes of fortune. For the first ten years it was extremely debatable whether Pakistan could survive industrially because of shortage of fuel. Stocks of coal, which had to be imported, mostly from India, were costly. Boring for oil had yielded little result. Harnessing of water could be only a partial solution. The picture was gloomy in the extreme. If in an awkward mood, India could just about hold Pakistan to ransom by cutting off coal supplies. Nevertheless, when the threat came, with incredible deftness Pakistan switched quickly and efficiently to diesel oil for locomotives, and saved herself from a transport breakdown in the nick of time. No recrimination or fatalistic inertia, but prompt and wise action rescued the country. This did not, however, do anything to overcome the overall shortage of fuel and power until something happened which was tantamount to a miracle, and Pakistan really could take fresh heart. Natural gas in probably unlimited quantity was found up-country in the hills approximately

280 miles north of Karachi. The first reaction was acute disappointment. Those in charge of operations wanted oil, not gas. But a shrewd British manager was convinced that natural gas could be made to do what oil would do, and experiments soon proved him to be right. The gas was piped to Karachi on the coast, the cost of electricity was reduced, power was available for a new industrial area, and it seemed as if this timely discovery would literally save the economy of the nation at a most opportune moment so far as fuel and power were concerned. When staying in Karachi in 1958 with this far-sighted Englishman, it was from a host of grateful Pakistanis that I heard his praises sung. Well knowing the measure of his contribution, he said little about it, except of the need to press on. In line with successive generations of British businessmen, he was bringing the benefits of science to remedy the drastic needs of an undeveloped country, and saw the results in terms of good sense, good business, and the royal road to progress in the twentieth century. The question of exploitation did not arise. In contemporary jargon, there were 'no political strings attached'. The Sui Gas Transmission Company was thoroughly geared to the purpose of supplying Karachi, the then capital, with the resources of nature, so that a population of 2 million people might have light, power, and work.

This kind of thing was exceptionally encouraging and further stimulated national pride, in the interests of Pakistan in her hour of need, self-interest being kept right out of the picture. But, typical of the East, this can not always be so, and here we come to one of the saddest features of an otherwise thrilling era of recovery—a resurgence of corruption in many Eastern lands. It may always be difficult in business circles to hold within bounds the influences of bias and favour, but when hard-bargaining capsizes into treachery and position is exploited to feather one's nest, then a moral rot has set in which vitiates the entire situation. Standards of integrity are of paramount importance, quite as vital in business and commercial circles as in private life, and once these standards are allowed to slip they are infinitely more difficult to re-learn or indoctrinate. Of necessity, therefore, Government circles need to set an example for the good of the character and reputation of the nation, and once undue corruption creeps in the whole ethic of public dealing deteriorates. In the last resort, it is the character and integrity of senior officials which alone can guarantee likemindedness in the lower levels of administration, short, of course, of the threat of disciplinary action and penalties.

But corruption has always been notoriously prevalent in south

and east Asia, and can do infinite harm to all the reviving and new nations unless held severely in check and exposed as morally wrong, patriotically subversive, and damaging to character. With ample justice, it has always been claimed that the old Indian Civil Service was essentially a body of honest men. So successful were they in dispensing justice, unearthing wrong, and inculcating the principles of truth by which men live that they did a great deal to reduce corruption in public life, though it could never be eliminated. Many of the best administrators in the East were conscious of their high calling as Christians, and never stooped to purely selfish ends or betrayed their loyal witness. Certain business circles conveyed something of the same ethic and insisted on high standards of integrity. But the moment political control was handed over to Asians the subtle voice of temptation began to whisper first faintly and then with more abandon, and Eastern wills began to weaken in the face of it. Temptation of this sort has led to innumerable disasters. By-and-large it was corruption that discredited the Chiang Kai-shek régime in China latterly, and gave the Communists the excuse that they were 'cleaning up' the situation. It was a sort of corruption that encouraged exporters in Indonesia to smuggle their goods to Singapore, thus robbing the Central Government of control of trade and legitimate revenue from taxation, both of which Indonesia needed badly. Drastic financial action was also needed in 1959 to curb racketeering and deflate ill-gotten gains. Corruption can be the undoing of untold good, and is clearly contrary to the true spirit of nationalism.

An example from personal experience will give a good illustration of the contrast in principles. One evening the telephone rang in the private house of a business executive with whom I was staying in one of the great cities of South Asia. A trustworthy agent was reporting that he had been successful in buying the rights over a strip of territory over which a pipe-line was to be laid. The price was agreed, the documents were in order, and all was fixed for the transaction. There was just one further matter. The local government lands official was expecting a handsome bonus for himself. He had done no more and no less than his duty, and yet expected a considerable private perquisite. Incensed beyond words by such a demand, the business executive merely said: 'Carry out the transaction; pay for the land; also pay the local official what he demands, but be sure and get a receipt.' Two hours later the telephone rang again, and the agent reported that all was signed, sealed, and in order, and the land official had declined to press his demand. He had been quick to realize that his bluff was called; any receipt

would have been used as evidence against him in a court of law, and under a charge of attempted or successful corruption he would probably have been dismissed his post. It needs no moralist to enlarge on the implications of this. Unscrupulous officials, whether at the centre of affairs or near the periphery, are in a position to misuse their authority and feather their nests in a host of ways. The power and blight of temptation can be reduced by seeing that they are reasonably paid—high officials in particular. Nationalism, therefore, has to be supported by loyalty and discipline, even when there is no one to impress it. Otherwise self-interest and selfishness creep in and the inherent recovery of a nation is undermined.

*

Another aspect of nationalism must not be overlooked. Nationalism can be a cloak for anything. It begins by rejecting all that is not *sui generis* and indigenous, condemning all that is essentially alien or unliked. This operation, so often under the banner of 'Denouncing the West', clears the way for fresh influences which may in themselves be quite as foreign as all that has just been expunged. Thus Communism, by clever association with national movements and aspirations, has gained ground under safe cover. Occasionally when Communism has been accused of being the newest form of world imperialism it has retreated back under the national cloak and has shrouded its identity for the time being with innocuous patience. National parties, therefore, can be of any political complexion, from extreme right-wing to extreme left-wing, and motives and policies can be indescribably mixed.

Furthermore, parties which originally led their nations into liberation and reconstruction, as, for example, the Quomintang in China and the Congress Party in India, are not necessarily the parties that have easily held the allegiance of the nation once their objectives have been achieved. Some have; some have not. Some have become stultified when fresh minds have not replaced the old guard at appropriate intervals. Others have just not moved with the times. By now most national parties have grown out of the original spirit of revolt, and have managed to convince the electorate that they are fighting for just rights and progressive well-being. Thus the National Party in Indonesia, in order to keep in the forefront of public attention, has constantly to whip up a standing grievance—the non-surrender of West Irian by the Netherlands to the new Indonesian Republic. This pulls the nation together in a common cause, and implies that full satisfaction cannot be attained in any field of endeavour while the nation remains truncated. It is one of the weaknesses of nation-

alism at the emotional level that it has to have frequent 'shots in the arm' of this nature.

Nations that have contented themselves with consolidating their independence and made sure of political stability have far more quickly found favour in the eyes of the world than those which have set out to grasp more and more. Turkey is one of the best examples of admirable sense and success in this respect. Instead of claiming all that had once belonged to the fallen Ottoman Empire, Kemal Ataturk, the archetype of one kind of nationalism, had the courage to restrict his work within a manageable geographical range. Thus Asia Minor in time found a new inner strength and stability which stands out in marked contrast to most of her neighbours. A more ambitious leader might have overreached himself in trying to regain the lost territory which had already become succession States. He had a few nibbles, but knew when to stop.

A cynic once remarked that nations are 'united by a common misconception as to their origins, and a common aversion to their neighbours'. There is tremendous truth in both ideas, and nationalism plays on both. Most modern nations are racially complex and polyglot, but manage in time to induce or acquire a relative homogeneity. To build a sense of national unity, India has used the constitutional quandaries of Hyderabad, Kashmir, Goa, and Kerala. To keep the nation on its toes, Communist China repeatedly renews its claim to Formosa (Taiwan). These are partly tricks of the political trade, for new nations are frontier-conscious and nationalism lives on such issues.

CHAPTER 2

Racialism

As the future of Asia unfolds and a new pattern of society emerges, a force even stronger than nationalism is likely to come more and more to the fore, and that force is racialism. The day of white domination in Asia has been called to account, and the so-called coloured races are on the march. Nothing can bar the way to the onward roll of this surging momentum. At its broadest base it has already found a dynamic political expression in the Afro-Asian grouping of nations, a conception that stands for something new, an assertion of equality with the 'West'—Europe and America—and a prospect of greater influence to come. Racialism breaks down into many groupings on the continent of Asia, with restricted and regionalized tensions and impact, as well as this broader and more sweeping horizon—the Afro-Asian notion.

For definition purposes in this chapter, the term 'race' is used not in any strictly scientific sense, but in the popular sense denoting awareness of common ancestry and stock, geographical affinity, and character likeness. In this general but relevant sense no Japanese is going to pretend he is Chinese. Pride forbids it. No Malay will think of himself as an Arab, in spite of any religious and cultural links. No one will claim to be a Jew unless he is one. Yet not many years ago responsible Middle East politicians were admitting that Jews and Arabs were ethnically 'cousins', stemming from the same Sumerian stock and civilization, with frequent inter-marriage down the ages.

At bottom, most of these races, big or small, harbour a sense of pride in the past, a sub-conscious reminder of greatness however remote, and by reflex action nourish some hope of recovery. Most races have had a golden age, short-lived or prolonged, and the memory endures. Persian armies reached Europe long ago. Indian ambassadors of the Asoka period were known all over Asia. The

Chinese have regarded their country as the hub of the universe, the Middle Kingdom around which others revolved somewhere out on the periphery. Arab armies from Asia could conquer the North African coastline in a couple of generations and penetrate to Western Europe before meeting their first major setback. The East has had fantastic vitality.

The present reinvigoration, therefore, carries with it a sense of destiny, a feeling that the superiority of the West is punctured and the coloured races of the East now have their chance, their turn, their way.

This dangerous desire for superiority has been well summed up by Dr. Radhakrishnan, Asian philosopher and Vice-President of India, speaking at the 30th International Congress of P.E.N. (Poets, Essayists, and Novelists) at Frankfort-am-Main in July 1959. He declared:

Each race, each creed, each nation regards itself as chosen of God, as the elect of the future, as educator of the human race. There is a self-righteousness which each of them feels about its culture, its pattern of life and, unconsciously if not consciously, uses its reasons to save its emotions and develop aggressive hostility to all who reject this pattern and who are committed to other values.

This pride of race is quite exceptionally strong—in the last resort and over the centuries infinitely stronger than the factor of nationalism, which we referred to earlier. The two forces overlap intricately, but race is the stronger of the two.

How else does one account for the Jew? Hounded and hunted about for centuries, persecuted beyond measure, scattered over the face of the globe, assimilating himself into the community where he can and where he likes, he yet retains his Hebrew pride, knows his kith and kin, continues to contribute handsomely to the world of scholarship and learning, and is resilient enough to capitalize an opportunity to carve out a new nation against every imaginable difficulty. He can never forget what he believes to have been the promise of God to his forefathers: that the Jews will inhabit the land between the Nile and the Euphrates, or at least the narrower kingdom of David and Solomon—say, from Sinai to the foothills of Hermon. Strange that so small a race, numbering little more than 15 millions at present, of whom but 2 million live in Israel, should yet provide so many of the intellectual *élite* of the world—thinkers, musicians, scientists, jurists, financiers. What a paradox that Adolf Hitler, the arch-criminal and would-be liquidator of the Jewish race, should employ a Jew, Dr. Schacht, as his economic adviser

and President of the German Bank, for no one else could match his financial insight and genius. The Jews know their capacity, and it is phenomenal. For them the future once again is full of promise. They have a land of their own at last, and history is coming full circle in their favour, or so it would seem. Race, indeed, is something to take pride in, and for them Zionism is its political expression.

While this momentum was embryonic between the 1890s and the First World War, no great reaction was encountered. The Arab world had not woken up to what was happening. Jews could infiltrate into Palestine in small numbers without arousing suspicion. As long ago as 1830 the young Benjamin Disraeli had noticed with surprise how lenient and fair the Ottoman rule had been to minorities in Jerusalem, including Jews, of whom he was one. But the door really opened on a new era when the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 stated that the British Government viewed with favour the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine. From this document can be traced the two divergent trends which have stamped Middle East politics ever since—the build-up of Jewry from a quiescent minority to determined nationhood, and the stimulation of a vociferous Arabism in counterblast to the rapid appearance of Zionism. One racial grouping antagonized the other until the atmosphere was polluted with hostility, revenge, and shafts of verbal poison. It is difficult to foresee the outcome, and particularly sorrowful for anyone, like myself, who knew the Middle East between the two world wars, and can remember Jews and Arabs, as well as Greeks, Armenians, and others, dwelling side by side, working in the fields together, their children at school together, and learning one from another in the days of British mandate rule under the League of Nations. The brotherhood of man did operate for a short time in Palestine, in spite of periodic outbursts of hate and later of civil war. There was a time when Arabs praised the leadership and administration of a British Jew, Sir Herbert Samuel (later Lord Samuel) during his term of office as High Commissioner in Palestine. The Jews, for their part, expecting favour at his hand, complained of his impartiality and refusal to be biased. But as time went on the early days of moderation and precarious harmony broke down under the antagonisms of race—pride against pride, one culture clashing with another, and basic characteristics refusing to budge an inch or to be reconciled. When the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, Dr. Graham Brown, who made a practice of giving lifts in his car to Jew and Arab alike, was killed at a level-crossing with a passenger of each race in his vehicle, it was almost a parable

both of the problem and the impasse. In life the Jew and Arab were at loggerheads. In death they were united. But only the teachings of religion and the detachment of a third party could hold the situation together or pour oil on troubled waters. That particular period was over when the British left Palestine, and the country was suddenly partitioned into Israel and Jordan. The intervention of a third party will probably still be needed in the future, and the only authority that seems justified in intervening is the United Nations, either in the person of its Secretary-General, whose attentions are continuous, or in the shape of a commission whose findings and recommendations carry the subsequent moral weight and backing of the United Nations and are fulfilled in application.

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On the other side of Asia racialism is bound to play a dominant part in Far Eastern politics in the next few decades. As a people, the Chinese, however mixed in pedigree with various racial groups, are unquestionably the immediate human force to be reckoned with in world history. While the acknowledged champions of East and West—Russia and the United States—jostle each other for diplomatic advantage in the world of power politics and succeed in capturing the headlines in consequence, China moves relentlessly forward in ominous silence like an ocean that erodes a coastline. More is likely to come out of China than the outside world is willing to allow, and the certainty of this arises out of the character of the people. The Chinese scarcely know what it is not to work. Their physical output is prodigious and they know how to drive themselves in whatever endeavour they undertake. In this they differ greatly from nations south and west. This is what makes it likely that one day they will match or dominate others. In addition, they are astute, patient, thrifty, far-sighted, inventive, ruthless—all essential characteristics for a constructive future.

This is not to say that the Chinese cannot be internally divided, for cross-sections of opinion and emphasis are inevitable, and in the past secret societies, as we all know, have flourished and abounded in China.

But the contemporary point of interest and concern is the fact that several million Chinese have emigrated in recent decades, and the total population of Chinese-by-race now living overseas in South-East Asia alone is something in the neighbourhood of 12 to 15 million. This total is spread chiefly over Indonesia, Malaya, Thailand, and Singapore, and in every country they have a knack of penetrating quickly into commerce and trade with their gifts of imagination and industry. Every shade of political allegiance is

represented, from hardened traditionalist to revolutionary Marxist, from Western-educated capitalist to local patriot, from moderate democrat to argument-trained Trojan-horse Communist. In many respects Singapore is perhaps the key to the situation.

Over three-quarters of the inhabitants of this independent island state are Chinese, and politically speaking it is in their power either to maintain the prosperity of the island as the great commercial juncture in the East or use the island influence as a lever to other ends. The politics of the island are complicated enough at the best of times, and the multiplicity of factions is quickly felt. The atmosphere of contention in the past has sometimes been more akin to gang spirit than serious politics, with too rapid a change-over of personalities in leadership.

As things are at present, Singapore and Malaya are constitutionally quite separate, and each can go its own way, but the two are so interdependent that expediency dictates a future closer association. There are strong arguments both ways. Geographically only a narrow causeway, a few stones' throw in length, divides them. But this is a vital lifeline for both. Much traffic from Malaya passes to the port at Singapore, where the shipping, banking, exporting, and insurance facilities are time-honoured. Singapore is still international, with the big business concerns largely in the hands of Westerners, especially British, for it was entirely British foresight and enterprise that transformed a neglected, fever-stricken island into one of the great business centres of the world. The only other sizeable minorities are Indian and Malay, but the overwhelming majority of the population is Chinese, and in recent years has become increasingly political-minded.

If Singapore ever became organically linked with Malaya, the influence of the Chinese in Malaya would begin to count for so much as to threaten the Malayan balance. It is suspected that under cover of the Chinese, Communist influence might gradually worm its way from Chinese sources into trade union organizations until it was too late to check the trend. It is no exaggeration to say that Singapore, for this very reason, is the plum most desired by Communists in South-East Asia, for its acquisition by the Communist world would upset the entire balance of forces, political and commercial, in that part of the world. Thailand, Malaya, and Indonesia would have to revise their attitude to Communism, and would have to choose whether to become more resistant and wary or risk accommodation. It is not an easy or enviable choice in a day of cruel competition.

Many of the overseas Chinese abhor what is happening in old

China, with its ruthless and radical change in outlook, its excessive direction of life and restriction of human freedom, its unceasing propaganda and self-advertisement. Thousands of them are loyal citizens of the countries in which they reside abroad, glad to be free to live and work as suits them best. These dread the extension of new China, and are quickly alarmed by news of Communist moves in South-East Asia.

On the other hand, many other Chinese are secretly delighted that China is now reasserting herself as one of the great nations of the world, rapidly aiming at becoming second to no one. The dragon is wide awake. This resurgence naturally alters the whole perspective of life. Even when all is not as well as it should be in China, the new modernization of life gives just grounds for pride and quickens a sense of admiration which is a first step towards loyalty.

In Thailand, for example, many Chinese families have lived there for generations and are culturally Thais. They are thoroughly integrated in the national life and have been accepted as Thais. They have intermarried and given every appearance of settledness. But they have kept their Chinese ways and names in many cases and are always in a position to revert or accommodate themselves to changes of circumstance. It has already begun to happen. There are ample indications to show that in almost imperceptible ways the Chinese have begun to close their ranks and protect their separate identity. There is less intermarriage than hitherto. They gravitate more to each other, and their collective awareness is more pronounced.

In Bangkok in 1958 I made a rough tally of newspaper influence among Chinese. Five Chinese newspapers, each with a relatively small circulation, suggested nothing ominous or significant, until one discovered that the circulation of most newspapers was surprisingly limited. Fifteen thousand copies of a daily newspaper was a good average net sale. In this case a possible 75,000 copies of Chinese newspapers, read in all probability by several people each, would easily cover a reading public of, say, 200,000 Chinese at least, perhaps a quarter of a million. This could be a disturbing fact. In the hands of editorial management warming to strong left-wing evolutionary change, a racial minority could be swayed away from the national tradition and produce an internal weakness within the State. An erstwhile asset could become an unexpected liability. Which will prove the stronger—personal affiliation to the land of one's adoption, or the powerful homing instinct for the country of one's origin? In the ensuing dilemma other attractive pulls can make the question more vexatious than ever.

Throughout the length and breadth of South-East Asia this question applies today. The most virile racial minority in each large nation is Chinese, and although this minority nowhere holds the political reins of government, except in Singapore, it is the racial grouping that most exhibits a genius for controlling trade and commerce, and this is where character in the long run is bound to tell.

In this part of the world it is the Chinese who qualify for Napoleon's scornful dubbing of the British as a 'nation of shop-keepers'. With the most commendable patience, thrift, and industry, the Chinese have built up, through personal initiative, a network of Chinese-run shops and firms all over South-East Asia. On the whole, by keeping out of politics they have avoided attracting attention to themselves, and so have been able to emigrate, take root, and multiply without over-hindrance. With a hardihood that can put up with temporary frustrations and a fortitude that guarantees advance, the Chinese are in no hurry to convert commercial penetration into a political lever. Rather the reverse. Given time, the one usually leads to the other, and time is running in their favour at the moment.

In contrast to these character assets of the Chinese, the nationals of some other countries are less hard-working, less far-sighted, and less purposeful, and therefore produce a less virile race and a not-so-productive nation. The Chinese is always practical, with a high sense of responsibility and discrimination. He is not a time-waster, nor is he usually as ridden with superstition as are multitudes of others in South-East Asia. Therefore the Chinese are a vital element in the whole future development and destiny of this rich and fertile part of the world, and their clannishness and resilience will see them round many an awkward turn in the road for decades to come.

Century after century in the past the Chinese have pressed down into South-East Asia, have conquered, settled, and become indigenous. The Indian civilization has also extended over Malaya, Indonesia, and elsewhere, followed later by a veneer of European civilization. Now the Chinese are making themselves felt again, and the time must come, and in places is already present, when Chinese and Indian cultures jostle each other for pride of place and rival each other for survival. The rivalry between China and India is not merely a matter of military clash at points of physical juncture in mountainous frontier regions. It is a headlong clash of cultures and civilization, even at an individual level, over a vast extent of South Asia.

As the very thought of 'China' stands for Communism in the

minds of many, it is precariously easy to fall into the danger of thinking that most Chinese overseas are sympathetic to Communism when in fact many of them are avowed antagonists. The position is very confusing when we find non-Chinese Communists outside China looking to Peking for leadership and thereby incurring the stigma of treachery to their own country, while at the same time one finds Chinese, say, in Malaya who may be more loyal to Malaya than, for argument's sake, a Communist Indian may be to India. The Communist Indian may have a stronger leaning to Peking than the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur. In this case an ideology overrides race. Thus is the situation in Asia fluid, provocative, and irreconciled. Worse still, it is open to every device of intrigue, cunning, and blackmail.

But the problem of racial tension and conflict is not to be traced only in the broad sweeps of a large canvas. It is also in innumerable smaller scale relationships, where every pin-prick is magnified and distorted. It can be tribal in Burma, regional in Sumatra, linguistic in Ceylon.

Ceylon is a very good example of the difficulty of forming a multi-racial society even in a relatively small area (25,332 square miles) and with not too great a population (just over 8 millions). Yet on the island of Ceylon are well over 1 million Tamils, either originally or recently from South India. Those who have lived on the island for generations are virtually accepted as indigenous, but many continue to live in Tamil groups and to use their own language instead of adopting Sinhalese. Tamils who have recently migrated to the island are at heart often more Indian than Ceylonese, and also still adhere to their own language.

The Indian Government has on occasion treated these Tamils as by right Indian citizens, qualifying for Indian protection, and requested the Ceylon Government to recognize them as such. Equally, the Ceylon Government has tried to eliminate the distinction by insisting that Sinhalese be the paramount official language, thus gradually undercutting the usefulness or validity of Tamil as a language. This manoeuvre touches the Tamil on the raw, hits the instinct of race through the medium of language, and invites trouble from several quarters.

It has been suggested that in such contingencies the only satisfactory way out is to devise a system of dual nationality, so that the Tamils, for example, can be either Indian or Ceylonese or, if need be, both. But difficulties immediately arise. Such a policy would give India a vested interest in a section of the Ceylon population, and the complications of protection, liability to tax, representation,

and so on might be infinitely more troublesome in practice than the compromise looks in principle. A clear dividing line and the long-term prospect of assimilation seem preferable to a dual nationality formula which can flare up into a political issue or lever at any moment.

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Racialism has become the political factor it is because of continuous aggravation, not just because the white races intruded into Asian lands and assumed a superior attitude and position, but because of what followed in its train—the concessions and annexations which came to be interpreted as offences and insults to dignity. The extra-territorial rights which China signed away by treaty to Western powers were a terrible loss of face. The memory remains. The legislation passed by Australia and the United States prohibiting or limiting the immigration of Asians into their countries was taken as unwarrantable legal snubs, which some Asians are still set upon avenging. Indeed, the prejudice of some white folk against coloured is not a bit as intractable as the anti-white animosity of some non-whites.

The problem is to know how best to put to useful service the undoubted power that underlies racialism and is inherent in race. When the distinctive contributions of the varying races begin to manifest themselves successfully, the old wounds of slight and injured pride will heal again, and the sense of backwardness will be replaced with the satisfaction of progress. At the broad-horizon level, such as Afro-Asian conferences, this is already working itself out hopefully in terms of declared resolution. International co-operation will help to mellow the former disaffections and provide an outlet for all positive expression. But much of the goodwill generated at this high level is subsequently vitiated by certain national politicians who use the interracial friction for selfish ends. Only as the outlook of the more responsible sections of opinion in the East becomes more confident and discriminating will the narrower machinations of secondary politicians lose some of their impetus.

The link between the awareness of race and the craving for power will be considered in the next chapter, when we look into the idealism that was fostered at the Bandung Conference of 1955.

Meanwhile, where politicians have largely failed, religion has been infinitely more successful. To Christianity and Buddhism alike, race presents no barriers. Spiritual discipleship is far stronger than pedigree, and for this very reason the authorities of Church and State have not always seen eye to eye.

Indian Members of Parliament have occasionally asked the Government in New Delhi to prohibit any further entry of Christian missionaries into India. The fact that most missionaries have been European or American has tended to stamp Christianity as a Western religion, which it is not. It was born in Asia, and is universal in principle and application. To the demand for its exclusion or hampering, Pandit Nehru has never failed to draw attention to the fact that hitherto it is only Christians who have taken serious steps to tend lepers, heal the diseased, and succour the distressed on a really generous, compassionate, and non-Government basis or scale. India is in debt to Christian love and mercy. No thought of domination arises in a message of humble service.

Long before business circles trained Indians for posts of responsibility, and long before the Government encouraged Indians to shoulder political burdens, the Christian Church was delegating the task of local evangelism to Indians, training and ordaining clergy, and preparing for the great day when Indians would be entirely responsible for the care of the Christian religion in India, in parishes, schools and colleges, hospitals, and welfare work. Indeed, the transfer back of responsibility from West to East, from outside leadership to national leadership, was the aim of the Christian Church long before it became the declared policy of the Government, and the full credit for this vision of the Church has yet to be acknowledged. It was genuine from the outset; so much so that in some instances Christian missionaries, in order to be at one in heart and mind with the countries of their adoption and residence, not only took to wearing national dress and became fluent in the national language, but virtually cut themselves off from the lands of their origin. The famous group of distinguished British missionaries known as the Cambridge Seven, who went to the interior of China and lived as much as possible as Chinese among Chinese, did so in order to sow the seed of Christianity indigenously. Not all missions were so accommodating towards the great and ancient civilizations they approached. Nevertheless, the influence of religion will help to blend the vigour of race into the unfolding pattern of Asia.

CHAPTER 3

Idealism

Idealism is a living force in Asia, and the moments of excitement that accompanied the achievement of freedom in one Asian country after another, especially between 1945 and 1950, were also moments when idealism became actuality. A good measure of this idealism still persists.

Gandhi's philosophy of life at its best, and many of his utterances, were shot through and through with idealism. The driving incentive behind half the creative efforts in Asia is based on some ideal or another: to reach a standard hitherto unattained, to aim at some new project or plan a better model. The lofty principles enunciated in various charters, the targets set in five-year plans, the spirit of the final communiqué issued from Bandung in April 1955, from the doctrine of peaceful co-existence to the individual enterprise of Bhavé's agricultural challenge in India—all bear witness to idealism, theoretical or practical.

The new nations of Asia can afford to be idealistic, because for them the time is ripe. It is an era of golden opportunities, when the new wine of hope has to be poured into the bottles of new societies. Not to aim high is to misjudge and lose the day of opportunity. Idealism, therefore, is not a luxury, but something of a necessity, and one can find it at every level of life, public and private, in most countries in Asia. The sense of ambition pervading Asia presupposes some idealism, and though the ideals may vary in worthiness, the very possession of an ideal is halfway to its attainment. 'Where there is no vision a people perish', but Asia does not lack vision.

The one, and foremost, ideal already achieved is freedom—political independence and constitutional sovereignty. The very word still carries a touch of magic and optimism with it, though not quite as much in retrospect as it did in anticipation. In South-East

Asia the word is *merdeka*, a word that once implied the need to struggle for freedom, but now signifies victory—freedom achieved. Thus many a town has a Merdeka street, a Merdeka hall, a Merdeka club. There is a Merdeka Day in the national calendar of Indonesia.

It is legitimate for historians to draw a mild comparison between the optimism of much that was said and done in 1919 and 1920 in Europe and what happened in Asia between 1945 and 1950. Each world war produced its strong reaction. The principles of the League of Nations and the decrees of Versailles were intended to pave the way to permanent peace, and for all their failure were a sincere attempt in that direction. There was a buoyancy in the atmosphere in those early days of the League at Geneva, and the highest hopes were entertained of a just solution to all problems and disputes. Before it degenerated into wishful thinking and disillusionment, and eventually collapsed before the scorn of tyrants, this buoyancy stirred the wills of statesmen to learn the art of give and take, and reflected the desire of common people for agreement by discussion. The idealism behind it died hard, and had done measurable good betimes. India was the one great Asian country which had been a foundation member of that notable experiment, and had therefore tasted the idealism that inspired it.

Between 1945 and 1950 something of the same buoyancy and optimism rippled and raged through Asia. The folding back of Japanese conquests in the Far East and the lifting for a spell of war from the entire Asian scene were like the final chapters of an old book, full of climax—a new book opened up with a new theme and new subjects, nations with fresh heart. Herein was the mood of idealism.

One expression of this particular idealism was the enunciation in Indonesia of *Pantja Sila*, the Five Principles or pillars on which the State is theoretically founded. There is another formulation that goes by the same label, *Panchasila* or *Panchsheel*, the Indian model, but the two are by no means indetical.

The Five Principles of the Indonesian Republic are:

1. Belief in God.
2. Sovereignty of the people.
3. Nationalism.
4. Social justice.
5. Belief in the equality of all men.

The Five Principles of India are:

1. Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity.
2. Non-aggression.

3. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
4. Recognition of equality.
5. Peaceful co-existence.

Judged by any sensible and judicial yardstick, all these principles are indeed ideals, and public opinion generally is outraged when they are infringed. Difficulty only arises when each principle is subjected to closer definition and test, and then the sparks begin to fly because interpretations splutter with differences.

Let us consider the two formulations of *Panch Sila* together.

The Indonesian gives religion pride of place, and makes no bones about it. Spiritual values are important and fundamental, and therefore deserve State protection, and under this declared sanction all religions rest assured of recognition. It is what one might expect in any case of a nation in Asia, just because Asia is the continent from which all the great world religions have sprung. Indonesia, therefore, seems to be true to the deepest instinct in life when she insists on stressing first of all the right of everyone to hold to faith in God.

In direct contrast to this, the Indian formula makes no specific reference to religion at all, which is strange in a country so closely associated by tradition with religion. The one great Hindu country in the world, the land from which Buddhism sprang, the nation which has had an age-long veneration for mystics, contemplatives, and creative thought is the very nation which either feels that it need not emphasize the place of religion or is persuaded to ignore the issue by the soft breezes of secular influence. But the real answer is to be found in the circumstances that attended the formulation of the *Panch Sila*. These were part and parcel of a delicate diplomatic rapprochement between India and Communist China in 1954. Relations between these giant neighbours were inadequately defined, and the state of uncertainty was intensified by friction over Tibet. China clearly had designs on Tibet, and these were of grave concern to India. A treaty relationship was urgently called for, and into this treaty were written the principles governing correct conduct between the nations. They were, in fact, the ideals of international morality, and are, in principle, incontestable. So far as religion is concerned, it could be argued that recognition is sufficiently covered by the doctrine of peaceful co-existence. If each side allows differing viewpoints to prevail, then that is as much as any philosophy or religion should expect. Any further protection could be construed as favouritism towards one particular religion, or identification of the State with religion, or even the bolstering of religion into a vested interest within the State. Such State protection

begins to deny to religion the prime need for it to be supported and propagated by its own adherents.

In bringing about a *modus vivendi* between two countries like India and China, with such opposing outlooks towards religion in general, the one sympathetic and the other adverse, there was no particular reason why the two statesmen immediately concerned, Pandit Nehru and Chou En-lai, should make any special mention of religion. Some will say it went by default. Certainly it found no specific mention, as it does in the Indonesian version of the Five Principles.

Then we come to Indonesia's insistence on 'the sovereignty of the people': high-sounding and praiseworthy, but how does it work in practice? It implies that the government of the day must reflect the will of the nation or give place to another. But how is this to be operated? The Communist world depends on a single-party machine of government, which it claims can reflect the sovereign will of the nation by doing what it conceives to be in the national interest. To lend respectability to haunting ruthlessness, it has stolen the label 'democracy' from the West, and tried to attach it firmly to its own purpose of deception.

Western democracy, on the other hand, rejects the one-party rule, and believes in the cut-and-thrust of open discussion and debate before reaching decisions. This necessitates a greater freedom of mind and voice, and in practice expresses itself in a variety of parties and in the parliamentary system.

How far the Asian nations can adopt and adapt this kind of system to their own needs it is too early to say, because it depends to a great extent on the temperament of a nation, the willingness to be tolerant and to compromise, and a gradual and steady training in the techniques of collective responsibility. Therefore, Indonesia is content to state the ideal in general terms, while India and China merely promised in 1954 not to interfere with each other's internal affairs, and left it at that. China and India left each other to interpret 'sovereignty of the people' in their own, quite different, ways.

The third ideal in the Indonesian formula is nationalism, one of the ideological 'parents', so to speak, of all new nations. But even nationalism has its limitations. It is not of its true nature to seek to extend itself unduly; its aim is not to become international; it is not in essence 'missionary'. But Communism is missionary. Therefore, Chou En-lai was willing to pledge 'no territorial aggression', partly to offset alarm and partly because China was not yet ready for major extension on the *Lebensraum* or any other pretext, and

Pandit Nehru for his part wanted from China a signed pledge of non-aggression. Nationalism as such was not strictly the point at issue.

Fourthly, the Indonesian *Pantja Sila* aims at social justice, and infers an ordering of society where all the former insults and grievances, travesties, and yokes are lifted and corrected. This reaction to former oppression and subordination, first to inhibiting Dutch rule and then for a short interval to Japanese occupation, offers new hope and judicial rights to the individual. There is a personal as well as national aspiration that the 'bad old days' of exploitation associated with unenlightened colonialism will not recur. The long arm of justice will protect the citizen.

But the fourth Sino-Indian principle is really on a different plane altogether. The two giant nations do not mention the personal level, but say they will regard themselves as (nationally) equal in each other's eyes. This may sound curious and incongruous today, but it has to be remembered that until 1954 Communist China had been looked upon by the outside world as a black sheep in the civilized world, and very much an unknown quantity, almost closed to the outside world. India, on the other hand, was the greatest of the new nations of Asia, intimately known and trusted by the rest of the world. Ever since her intervention in the Korean War, China had been doubly out of favour in many nations. But India's agreement with China in 1954 over the future of Tibet did China a great service by its declaration of equality, and implied recognition as treaty-worthy. It was this agreement between Pandit Nehru and Chou En-lai, plus China's part in the settlement of the Indo-China conflict the same year, plus Chou En-lai's demure restraint at Bandung and the cordiality of his later South Asian tour, that together enhanced China's towering prestige in the next few years. But acute tension returned in 1959, when China carried out a military coup in Tibet.

As for the last article of faith, the fifth of the Sino-Indian principles, the ideal of peaceful co-existence really seemed for a time to mean a sincere burying of the hatchet, and to be the basis for a new hopefulness. The deep yearning for common-sense co-operation had finally won the day. But in the Non-Communist world Russia's ferocious suppression of the Hungarian revolt in October 1956 and China's onslaught against Tibet during the summer of 1959 torpedoed that ideal and showed up yet again the frailty of pledges. It will take years to repair the ideal again, but in spite of every setback, grave or minor, the idealism lingers on in the human mind as a quality that should still be cultivated, an instinct essentially right.

Meanwhile, the Indonesian *Pantja Sila* steers clear again of the high-level issues, and protests on a humbler plane that all men are equal, or should be treated as such.

We must now turn to idealism in the material world, for it would be a distortion of view to think that idealism only operates in the rarefied atmosphere of principle and theory.

The moment each Asian nation has achieved its independence, it has been determined to become economically self-sufficient, if at all possible. Not even the appalling problems of overpopulation, poverty, illiteracy, disease, or lack of capital and technical ability have minimized the hope that economic progress and prosperity will come to these underdeveloped parts of the world. Most governments have worked out careful schedules, many of them five-year plans, and these have usually set such a clear target over the period in a wide range of activities that the nations concerned have girded up their loins and worked towards the target with a new zest. The fixed targets themselves became ideals to be aimed at and reached or surpassed. Each rise in the target-level drew out more incentive still, and the ambition to reach it was sustained.

India's record in this respect is quite remarkable, for a nation traditionally agricultural has made incredible strides in the last few years, and is rapidly becoming an industrial nation as well. India hopes that by the end of her third Five-year Plan, about 1965, she may have created a self-sustaining economy. It was to this end that India concentrated on developing her iron and steel industry from the outset, so that her own foundries could process pig-iron, convert into steel, and supply metals for engineering purposes generally. Iron- and steelworks in Jamshedpur, Burnpur, and Bhadravati led the way, followed by three more blast furnaces in 1959 at Rourkela (Orissa), Bhilai (Madhya Pradesh), and Durgapur (West Bengal). The production target for the third Five-year Plan is about 10 million tons of steel and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of pig-iron by the end of the Plan period. These figures were unthinkable ten years ago. A heavy-machine-building foundry is also being created at Ranchi (Bhopal) in the hope that India may before long be able to provide her own plant and equipment for existing steelworks and the construction of new ones, thus making India independent of imports. It is in precisely such a way that the ideal of material independence supports the ideal already attained of political independence, and this is but one example.

This does not mean for a moment that India has lost touch with reality in its absorption with industrial development. That can never be, for village life is still basic, and at least 300 million

Indians are villagers. With full Government support, an attempt has been made for years to increase the self-help and self-reliance of villages through such schemes as the Community Development Organization, and to strengthen co-ordination between the village assembly (*panchayat*) and the co-operatives, the basic village institutions. But once again the ideal on which the whole enterprise depended was that of getting the villagers to think and plan together at the local level and not become overdependent on outside advice or aid or higher authority, for self-help is fundamental to existence as well as prosperity.

Because idealism is many-sided and can be impelled by such diverse motives, this is no reason to suppose that the quality of idealism need be lost when it comes to be translated into practical propositions. One of the best examples of this is in the working out of the Colombo Plan.

Basically, this Plan set out to improve the standards of living in South and South-East Asia—to do something to remedy the poverty and suffering of millions of Asians for their own sake, out of deep human longing to help. From the outset the overwhelming motive was altruistic. In modern jargon, there were ‘no political strings attached’. The Colombo Plan was the very reverse of the old economic system so frequently and easily denigrated by the epithet ‘colonialism’, by which is meant exploitation of more backward areas for the benefit of the controlling nations. In the colonial system, thus understood, it was the capitalist countries that always stood to gain, precisely because they had the brains, the equipment, the means, and the drive. The colonies, on the other hand, had the raw materials, the available labour and the potentiality of wealth without the capacity to bring these together and lead to vigorous production. But now that the old colonies were new-born nations of world status it was only right and proper that they too should possess and generate the ‘brains, equipment, means, and drive’ which would guarantee their becoming industrially and agriculturally progressive and able to hold their own in the modern world. Thus there came about a meeting in Colombo in January 1950, which eventually launched the scheme for ‘Co-operative Economic Development in South and South-East Asia’. It was decided to spend nearly £2,000 million from the moment the Plan came into operation in July 1951 and over the following six years in training technicians and experts, providing equipment, and generally increasing productivity. The sponsoring nations, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States, pledged themselves to *give* this help, not in the shape of a loan or a trade

pact or for repayment with interest rates, but as a genuine outright gift. The generosity was great, to meet most pressing needs. It would be stretching the loftiness of the motive too far to say that it was a belated or backhanded repayment by the mother countries of a debt they owed to former colonies. That would be a misconception both of the motive and of the spirit of the times. Yet there was a touch of it. Just as Albert Schweitzer, the brilliant philosopher-theologian-musician-doctor, gave up the amenities of European civilization and all manner of glittering prospects to dedicate himself to carving out a hospital and spreading the light of the gospel in a jungle of Central Africa, so the Colombo Plan, on a broader and different basis, set out to convey inestimable benefits from one group of nations to another, from West to East, from rich to poor, from the favoured to the underfed. As one Asian Prime Minister put it in a speech in Canada:

The economic aid that we so gratefully receive from you under the Colombo Plan is in the nature of a gift within a family. It does not consist of mere goods and services which Canada may export abroad, but wealth and goodwill which moves about, offering an excellent opportunity of bridging the economic gap between East and West in a spirit of friendly co-operation, rather than in an atmosphere of mutual obligation.

Of course, the ill-willed critic, determined to deflate all suggestion of generosity or idealism, will try to impute political motives to the Colombo Plan, and nothing is easier to do. In September 1949 China became Communist-controlled, and for the next few months a certain alarm and despondency began to afflict the countries of South and South-East Asia. Leading statesmen of South Asia, realizing that the strongest pre-conditions for the spread of Communism are hardship, misery, and starvation, were determined to improve material well-being in this vast area, for 'Communism does not flourish on a full stomach'. Chronologically, then, the Colombo Plan, initiated in 1950 and operative from 1951, can be seen as a hectic answer to an imminent danger. But even if this political element was in the minds of the planners in Colombo, the paramount factors were still twofold: desperate material need on the one hand and willingness to give on the other. Goodwill and compassion, and certainly not hard bargaining, were the true atmosphere at the birth of the Plan.

A further manifestation of idealism is to be found in the final communiqué issued at the end of the historic Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in April 1955. Underlying the document was a

suggestion that a degree of harmony could be attained if certain principles could be put into effect. These included exchange visits, cultural links, economic co-operation, and the safeguarding of human rights, all of which would strengthen the sense of fellowship between the nations concerned. Momentarily at least, Bandung achieved a remarkable success. It managed to bring together some nations which normally never met—nations which had this in common: that they had emancipated themselves from Western domination and were now anxious to show that they could stand on their own feet politically and economically. The triumph of independence had stimulated emotional buoyancy, but this still had to be translated into national stability.

Meanwhile, Bandung generated another ambition, the prospect of Asia playing a proportional part in the councils of the world. When the United Nations Organization had been established in 1945, only nine Asian countries were foundation members. Following the Bandung Conference, five more Asian countries were admitted to membership of U.N.O. in the same year, 1955—Cambodia, Ceylon, Jordan, Laos, and Nepal. By 1957 the nine Asian nations had grown to twenty-two, roughly one-quarter of the Organization. It is no exaggeration to say that since the Bandung Conference the Asian group of nations have felt more satisfied that they have gained their rightful place in the world forum, a recognition which had to be fought for and earned, and a voice in world affairs which signalized the recovered strength of Asia.

Idealism in Asia is incomplete without mention of its expression in individuals, for at a time when governments bulk large and bureaucratic statecraft is a fine art it is still the individual mind and the personal spirit that breaks through over and over again, in Asia as elsewhere.

Gandhi, who personified the spirit of India and linked it in a mystical way with practical idealism, Sun Yat-sen, who denounced the continuance of outworn autocracy and first preached the virtues of democracy to his own countrymen, Kemal Ataturk, who set to work to transform a nation and succeeded therein, Ben Gurion, who inherited a Zionist dream and saw that dream strike root as a State, Abdullah of Jordan, who saw visions of a Hashemite empire along the route of the Fertile Crescent, but failed to attain it, Sukarno, who had to overthrow both Dutch entrenchment and Japanese occupation in order that regeneration might come to Indonesia, U Nu, who struggled to reconcile Buddhism with progress and hold his nation intact against internal tension, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who blended a liberal outlook with tradition in the

moulding of a new Malaya, and many another creative Asian, were visionaries in their day, undaunted by every let and hindrance. Iqbal, by poetry and philosophy, promoted the idea of true man and the land of the pure, and popularized the word 'Pakistan', which was first coined by Rahmat Ali at Cambridge about the year 1932. Together with the political astuteness, legal mind, and determination of Mohammed Jinnah, the conception of a new Muslim State matured and became a fact, precisely because the idea in mind represented something potentially real. They were the individuals who made nations possible.

India has always been a land of ideas, today no less than before, and the ideas have almost always been allowed to run their course, and in this India proves her acceptance of intellectual freedom and respect for the individual. It is difficult to imagine India otherwise for any length of time. The mind and spirit in India just will not be suppressed, dragooned, and stultified.

Typical of this creative imagination and originality is the work and influence of Vinoba Bhave and his *Bhoodan* (land gift) movement from 1951 onwards, all of which has taken place since independence. The simple aim and object of Vinoba Bhave was to invite the wealthy landowners of India to give away some of their excessive acreage in order that it might be redistributed among the landless and poor for them to use and develop. His method has a Gandhian touch about it, for there is no attempt at exerting any kind of pressure other than moral persuasion. Bhave has simply trusted that the well-to-do will see the rightness of his appeal, and that out of a sense of sympathy and generosity they will desire to part with some of their means for the common good, and Bhave has not hoped in vain. In the first seven years 5 million acres were so given, and the Government of India, which at first tended to regard the scheme with disdain as too idealistic and Utopian to work, was forced by results to take official notice of it at that stage. Pandit Nehru himself visited Vinoba Bhave to convey his personal interest and admiration. The remarkable feature of the scheme is that the whole basis is so voluntary, with no massive machinery to run the campaign, no set quotas, no overall direction, but just a direct appeal to better natures.

Like so many embryonic ideas, its origin was the by-product of something else, a Communist-inspired peasants' revolt in Telengana, Andhra. Bhave saw at once that the Communist method of compulsion was not native to India, and that the healthier attitude to land reform should be willing change. Out of this attitude his movement sprang. By 1955 an additional aspect developed: that

property-owners should surrender their individual rights to their own communities and thus make possible the voluntary reorganization of village life on a collective basis. In some respects this may smack of Communism, but it is different in that the incentive is local and voluntary and not in any way decreed from above, and the element of compulsion does not arise. Yet in the first two and a half years no less than 3,000 villages had already been reorganized on this *Gramdan* (village gift) principle.

Vinoba Bhave envisages the prospect of every village becoming agriculturally self-supporting, weaving its own cloth, and entrusting the management of its own internal life to its own council of elders. This is entirely in line with Mahatma Gandhi's thought, and certainly true to Indian instinct and custom.

As a consequence of Bhave's initiative the will to reform has been stirred, and official steps have been taken to ensure three objects by the process of State planning: first, the abolition of absentee landlordism (*zamindari*), second, the building up of a landed peasantry, and, third, a limitation on acreage wealth.

Another individualist and pioneer who gives the lie to any thought of regimentation is Jayaprakash Narayan, one-time Marxist, former leader of Indian Socialism, and now in full revolt against power politics at every level. Of farming ancestry himself, abstemious in the best Eastern tradition, soul-searching and meek, yet vigorous and determined, he has given his support to Vinoba Bhave's movement.

Perhaps the word 'idealism' used as the title of this chapter is too exalted and flattering. In view of the pathetic struggle of life that goes on in Asia, it will be too high-sounding and unrealistic to many readers. But there is hardly another word to substitute for it in trying to describe the new zest, the re-kindled hope, and the aspirations that stir in millions of Asians as they play their individual part in these dynamic days of change. It is certainly a force to be reckoned with alongside nationalism and racialism, and infuses many of the subjects discussed in the following chapters.



PART II POLITICAL

CHAPTER 4

Democracy

Democracy is defined in general terms as government of the people by the people for the people. The definition implies a wide spread of responsibility and the acceptance of a collective authority backed by a general consent. Theoretically, therefore, the ideals of democracy offer a balanced harmony that arises out of a spirit of co-operation, and should call out the best instincts of good nature, tolerance, and willingness to deliberate.

As a pattern of society and method of government, democracy is a relatively modern introduction. Although its roots stretch far into the past, it is of a fairly recent maturity. It has taken centuries and centuries to evolve, and is inevitably associated with ideas of the party system, free elections, and parliamentary government. Furthermore, as democracy was developed in the West—by way of Greek philosophy, Roman law, and Christian culture—and in one particular expression of that amalgam, it carries with it the suggestion that democracy may well be the right political 'road' for Europe and America, but not necessarily suitable for many an Asian nation. That is the issue for this chapter.

The subject is all the more pressing because it is generally agreed that democracy is even now going through its severest test

in Asia, and democracy in Asia is said to be in the balance. How far is this true? Is democracy essentially or necessarily Western, or can it adapt itself to become indigenously Asian? How strong is it where it now operates, and what prospects are there of continuation and development?

Mischief-makers do not find it in the least difficult to make political capital out of the fact that democracy as a way of government was the legacy of Western imperialism. It was a predominantly British legacy. In colonial government the French never lived up to their democratic traditions, and at heart loathed the possibility of having to grant self-government one day to subject peoples. They blended republicanism with imperialism, and cloaked the policy-blend with the labels 'union' and 'associated states'. The victims were not blind to the realities. Similarly, the Dutch were even more resistant than the French to the concept of eventual transfer of sovereignty, and therefore never encouraged the development of democratic institutions in Dutch-controlled territories. But the British thought quite otherwise. The rights of subject races were never out of mind or ruled out of account. Their future would one day be in their own hands, and by successive stages of trust that day was prepared for, slowly but surely. In India, for example, the Morley-Minto reforms, the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, and the Round Table Conference that preceded the India Act of 1935 were all steps that paved the way for independence. It was a Britisher who first promoted the idea of a Congress Party, and gradually the political awareness of the Indian Empire grew, and parties came into being. Most other countries in Asia lagged behind in this respect, and independence overtook some of them before they were politically ready.

In some new nations in Asia the whole apparatus of parliamentary democracy was modelled on the British system: an elected assembly with a clear distinction between Government and Official Opposition, a Speaker to supervise and control the proceedings, a Cabinet appointed by the Prime Minister, responsible in turn to Parliament and people. All this presupposed an enfranchised electorate, the existence of parties, and acquaintance with differing policies. It implied that individual intelligence would rise to the challenge and could be trusted to exercise responsibility.

It was as much to the instinct of true democracy as to anything else that Mahatma Gandhi spoke when he used the words:

My work will be finished if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family that every man or woman is the guardian of his or her own self-respect and liberty.

Democracy rests on the rights of the individual.

If India, for example, had merely taken over the machinery of Government which the British had introduced, and carried on the use of parliamentary institutions for no better reason than that they were ready to hand, then Western democracy might well be open to the charge that it was an artificial export, non-indigenous, and doomed to failure, for it cannot be denied that the successful practice of parliamentary democracy did come from the West. But democratic institutions in India, by and large, have so easily become the media by which opinion is distilled into legislation and translated back to the nation in law and order that one is forced to conclude that democracy is as valid and operative in India as it is elsewhere, and is, therefore, deserving of support and stability. Making full use of the democratic system was part and parcel of India's 'revolution by consent'.

The prejudiced observer too easily decries democracy in Asia, and judges it by some weaknesses self-evident in the West—a certain lack of authority, cumbrousness and sluggishness in action, and argumentative delays. All the more pessimistic do some critics become as they scan the Asian scene, and note the swing towards military dictatorship in a whole group of nations—Thailand, Burma, Pakistan, Iraq, the Lebanon—and envy the imposed authority which the alternative offers.

Nevertheless, the present leaders of India, far from lacking confidence, have put their faith in the eventual success of the democratic system, and are determined to see it work.

Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, sister of India's Prime Minister, Nehru, and a noted Ambassador in her own right, declared during a lecture tour in the United States in October 1959 that 'India is the doorway to democracy in the East'. She went on to explain her own unshakable faith in democracy, and claimed: 'Our democracy is an experiment and *when* it succeeds—I do not say *if*—it will no doubt be followed by others.'

What, then, are the grounds for Mrs. Pandit's confidence?

First and foremost, experience has proved over the initial thirteen years of India's political independence that the parliamentary system works in practice. The actual machinery of government has not in any way defaulted or been found wanting. On occasions of crisis or emergency, the Indian Congress has spoken with the voice of the nation, taken prompt and decisive action, and exhibited a soundness of judgment which has progressively enhanced India's prestige in the eyes of the world. This is all the more remarkable

when one remembers how complex and multiple a society India is, with its mixture of peoples, languages, and ideas.

Secondly, independence of thought is part of the Indian inheritance, and whatever political system operates in India must be available for the freedom of thought and freedom of speech which are so deep-set in the Indian character. Any system which attempted to suffocate thought or dragoon the nation would quickly generate a healthy reaction, for freedom more than discipline is the native air of India. Government must reflect character. The average Indian, if one may dare generalize, enjoys discussion and argument. His mind is alert and he is bred to think—far more so than many other nations.

Thirdly, it is often said that true democracy can only work in a nation of mature civilization. If this is true, then it is appropriate that India should be the testing-ground of democracy in Asia. The other possibility was China, and the experiment was tried, but it collapsed in the self-interest of the section that led the nation, administrative inadequacy, and a weak indulgence in too many compromises. The experiment in China was not genuinely indigenous, and therefore failed.

But in India conditions of freedom have allowed the power of thought to go on working and developing for generations, and the evolution of democracy has deeper roots than elsewhere, and has come readily to people who already possess a background of great culture and respect for truth.

Fourthly, Gandhi believed in the principle of democracy, and therefore the people were indirectly educated to the idea on the broadest possible popular front. Unconsciously, the seeds of many democratic ideas were sown in the truths and half-truths of Gandhi's utterances. He respected authority, yet he felt free to contest authority. Though he resisted authority, he willingly accepted the consequences. Democracy judged him. Democracy honoured him. It came to be realized that this kind of 'free' democracy was human, just, and enlightened. It served as an example for the whole of India, and even beyond.

Fifthly, the latest feature in India, and true to the intrinsic spirit of democracy, is a process of decentralization which began in 1959. A structure of village, district, and regional councils is emerging by means of which local leaders may initiate schemes for material and social progress, and proceed with their endeavours without the frustrations of an overwieldy bureaucracy. This process is still in its infancy, but began most encouragingly in innumerable districts. It has inserted a measure of flexibility into the governmental life of

the nation, and opens as wide as can be the way for local enterprise. Local problems of agriculture, welfare, and village life are likely to find quicker remedies and treatment under this new scheme, and the provincial governments will be relieved to some extent of detailed direction.

For the efficient functioning of true democracy two other conditions are normally necessary, and these apply in India: the national Army must be outside politics and the judiciary above corruption. The Army and the Courts are instruments of law and order and means of enforcement, and the fact that India has so maintained this noble tradition is a reflected tribute to British rule, which inculcated it.

In the final analysis, the working of true democracy depends on the moral fibre of the leadership at every level of authority pulling together for the common good. So far India has given ample proof of this capacity.

But the security of democracy can never be taken for granted. In Calcutta in the spring of 1958 one of India's leading diplomatic commentators asked me the direct and challenging question: 'Will there soon be war between India and China?' He was obviously worried, and was wondering how the situation looked to a Westerner re-visiting the East. The political signs of the times were not encouraging, but at the same time there was no acute or immediate tension. That was to come. But there was a sense of sinister contrast—the overwhelming power and progress of a massive China against a rather less impressive façade in India. Such a contrast, if a true one, might suggest an inherent weakness somewhere in the Indian structure of society, and this in time might invite attack from some outsider. If one looked for them, one could enumerate a list of trouble-spots and festering sores which could indicate anything but national health. The problem of refugees from East Pakistan, and the continuous, malicious incitement to make the maximum political capital out of distress, difficulty, and grievance; the embarrassment of a Communist administration in the southern state of Kerala, and the fact that Kerala might shine forth as an example of revolutionary success and bolster the hope of capsizing India eventually into the Communist way of life; the unhappy relationship between India and Pakistan, both over the question of sovereignty in Kashmir and the dispute over the division of the waters of the Indus basin—these and other questions could all be turned to political account, but so could almost any issue. Trade quotas and commercial agreements, the progress of five-year plans, the acceptance of technical advice from outside countries, cultural exchanges, and missions of

every sort could all be misinterpreted, but were in fact part and parcel of the new vitality. Could democracy in India digest such a surfeit of ideas and influence and yet retain intactness and integrity, or did it lack a measure of supreme control which seemed to be the strength of Communist régimes? That was the test in 1958. Surrounding nations east and west were more dependent on Army authority than parliamentary authority, and India was the one great nation that stood for parliamentary democracy.

India's resolve to prove that her way of government could be effective was shown in 1959, and in this she was helped by circumstances. China's military occupation of Tibet had the effect of unifying India, and put in train a number of consequential adjustments and new moves. China's pressing in from the north brought a common danger to Pakistan and India, and helped to harmonize their relationship. The Central Government in Delhi could not risk the possibility of any Trojan horse weakness or surprise within the nation, and took steps to call the Kerala Government to account. Widespread religious sympathy for the plight of the Dalai Lama, who escaped from Tibet to India, helped to consolidate the nation in opposition to advancing Chinese despotism. Pandit Nehru, speaking in the Lok Sabha, the Lower House in Delhi, spoke for the cause of freedom and justice, as expressed through parliamentary democracy, when he challenged the action of China in Tibet and condemned China's threat along the length of India's northern frontier. With the buffer state of Tibet finally under Peking control, India was thrown on the defensive, and democracy in India was suddenly supercharged with an extra burst of nationalism. In the very year when efforts were being made in Europe and America to reduce tension in the Cold War, events in Asia were running counter to all the overtures and aspirations. The ideological conflict, so far from being resolved, was very much alive, and the doctrine of peaceful coexistence promulgated anew in 1954 was being stretched to the uttermost in the relations between the very two countries which had enunciated the principle. Both in 1954 and 1959 the destiny of Tibet was the issue at stake. In 1954 China gained time and offset alarm. In 1959 China completed her design of incorporating Tibet. Communism scored a double victory. But even though the methods and successes of Communism are acceptable to China, it does not mean that democracy is not the thing for India. Indeed, up to the time of writing this chapter in 1960, Pandit Nehru is still saying almost every week that democracy is undoubtedly the suitable means of government for India, and that the marriage of the two will mature. Because of his wide experience

and political insight, no one can doubt his conviction about this, and his exceptional influence is likely to carry it over into the younger generation of Indian leaders.

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Politically, the enemy of democracy is Communism, so the way for Communism to combat democracy is to claim to be democratic, which is precisely what is happening. But Communism's self-justification in this direction is totally unconvincing. By definition, democracy is not one-party rule. If it ever is, something is likely to be wrong. Communism, on the other hand, is essentially one-party rule, efficient and effective, but intrinsically dangerous and potentially harsh, even cruel. If Communism can ever be truly called democracy, it is democracy 'from above', and not democracy 'from within'. The councils of the Soviet State—Supreme Soviet, Praesidium, and Council of Ministers—are so powerful that direction becomes dictatorial, and consent is another name for compulsion. Elections are a farce, judged by Western standards and techniques, because party lists and pre-selected candidates are governed by the party machine, and virtually no free choice is available to the electors. Pre-judged elections of this kind make a mockery of democracy. In Communism the remoulding of society is not a matter of gradual reform, but a proletarian revolution against the *bourgeoisie*—in other words, a class revolution with 'grass-roots in grievance'. But we will have a closer look at Communism in the next chapter.

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Meanwhile, what other countries in Asia can fairly claim to be genuinely democratic? Some will point to Malaya, some to Japan, others to the Philippines or Indonesia.

Malaya is still in the making, and her constitutional problems are not yet wholly solved. Malaya has its own special kind of monarchy, a senior Sultan in kingly office for a season of five years, a compromise system well-pleasing to the Malay, because it continues the Malay respect for the Sultans and surrounds the ruler with everything traditional. Court circulars, formal audiences, and a good measure of pomp and ceremony are the inevitabilities that attach themselves to monarchy in general, and Malaya is no exception in this regard. The party system has had to be hurriedly developed, and it is too early yet to say more than that it is working satisfactorily so far. However, the Chinese population, which is so astute and numerous, is an uncertain factor in the future, because they represent so many shades of opinion and are bound to be influenced by the ultimate relationship between Malaya and Singa-

pore. If Singapore is integrated with Malaya, then the non-traditionalist element will be stronger, and the entire area might be swung over from right to left in politics in time. It is simply too early to say. But in the period of continued transition there are also clear signs that the Muslim right-wing section is determined to recover strength and ground lost, especially in the mid-Eastern areas, and thus ensure that the present multi-racial policy is not one day eclipsed or overrun by a Chinese political resurgence.

Japan is, strictly speaking, outside the scope of this particular book, but in the context of Asian democracy it cannot pass without reference. Superficially, Japan is democratic, and at the moment democratic institutions operate satisfactorily. Written in to her present Constitution are pledges of faith in democratic principles, and historically one can point to innumerable ways in which a change of heart has come over the country and transformed a militant totalitarianism into a peaceable and law-abiding democracy. But traditions die hard and racial instincts are far more deeply planted than any veneer of face-saving ideology. Japanese democracy is at present more induced than indigenous. The ancient and more recent controlling forces that have gripped the imagination of the Japanese people are national pride amounting to fanatical patriotism, strong, centralized authority, Shintoism, and a sense of personal sacrifice—in fact, all the ingredients of a basic totalitarianism. This outlook on life could easily resuscitate itself, for the Japanese are by nature resilient, tough, clever, and calculating. Emperor-worship and State-worship are at present formally outmoded. In the paradoxical way that Clio, the muse of history, works it took an American General with the inclinations of a dictator to teach the Japanese the unwisdom of totalitarianism, and bestir them to a fancy for Western democracy. The eventual outcome of all these cross-currents will only show itself when the full flood of reversion to type comes into force. This will not arise, in any case, until Japan has further resolved her own internal tensions, which shade into each other from every colour and quarter, from vocal and violent left to proud and wounded right. The kill-or-cure test of democracy has not yet impinged on Japan.

In several other Asian nations, especially those which are partitioned, as, for example, Korea and Vietnam, the present struggle is really between Communism and nationalism, convulsive change and antithetical resistance, and the answer for the moment is deadlock. Ideology plays a vital part, it is true, but it is still possible that ancestral, cultural, historic, and racial proclivities will one day prove stronger than the doctrines of present-day division.

We come now to the country that can claim to have established democracy first in Asia in the modern period of history, the Philippines. Their democratic Constitution goes back to 1898, when Spanish domination succumbed to American weight of arms, and representatives were elected to the first National Assembly as early as 1907, four years earlier than the establishment of China as a republic.

Furthermore, the democratic system of Parliamentary government has worked well for many years in the Philippines, and is proof of democracy's acceptability in South and South-East Asia. Inevitably based on the American model and Western in most of its ideas, it nevertheless answers the purpose in the Philippines, and can claim to have few equals in Asia as an effective system of government.

An examination of the working of her democratic system in six fundamental aspects should help to prove the case.

First, individual liberty and security are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the Philippine Constitution. It is essential to have a warrant issued by a judge before any arrest can be made, detention without trial is contrary to the law of the land, and anyone brought to trial is presumed to be innocent unless proved to the contrary. Personal freedom can scarcely be more safeguarded.

Secondly, freedom of speech is likewise assured, and outspokenness is only limited by the laws of libel and sedition, which are themselves just and liberal and not seriously restrictive or inhibiting.

Thirdly, universal suffrage operates in the Philippines, based on age (twenty-one years) and literacy qualifications. As two-thirds of the adult population are literate and minimum education is steadily advancing, the electorate will continue to rise each year. Every official in the country is elected by direct vote, from the President himself down to the local councillors, elections being held for the latter every two years. In the first two Presidential Elections after the Second World War the Liberal Party won, and in 1953 and 1957 the Nationalist Party won. Thus the present President is a Nationalist and the Vice-President is a Liberal, which is proof enough of the workability of the party system.

Fourthly, the Constitution of the Philippines stipulates the separation of Church and State, thus minimizing the temptations of privileged position and power. Although 80 per cent. of Filipinos are Roman Catholic, there is no established Church as such in the Philippines, and this helps to guarantee freedom of religion to smaller Churches.

Politically, all parties within reason are at liberty to influence affairs, and this is partly ensured by the tacit guarantees to the principles of free enterprise and organized labour alike. Apart from the beneficial necessity of exchange controls, private enterprise is unhindered by the Government. Similarly, the trade unions are free to operate and are in no way Government-controlled; indeed, they are now freer to strike or bargain than they were a few years ago, when they were hamstrung by the necessity to submit to compulsory arbitration when difficulties and friction arose.

Sixthly, and as already mentioned in the case of India, the Army is outside politics, in the sense that it does not interfere in political issues, but serves the Government of the day both in the defence of homeland and in the enforcement of law and order.

From this catalogue of achievements, it is abundantly clear that at least one Asian nation has been able to adapt a Western parliamentary system to its own use and satisfaction, and is thereby an example to others. To some extent, therefore, this success calls in question the dogmatic statement of President Sukarno that 'Asian problems cannot be solved with Western formulae'.

If that were wholly true, then Communism also goes out of the window, for Karl Marx, the German Jew, researching and writing in the Reading Room of the British Museum in London and Lenin fomenting in Switzerland and then translating his theories into political action in Russia were both European, and therefore alien, or even 'colonialist' in Asia. If democracy is foreign to Asia because of its Western origin, so is Communism. If Communism is permissible as a social, economic, and political experiment, then so is democracy. The validity of each will be tested by survival value, and this in turn will be tested against acceptability, workability, and, ultimately, spiritual truth.

In name, democracy also operates in a number of other Asian countries, but cannot yet be said to have become stable or secure. The temperament of Ceylon is so volatile, politics so personal, and change so possible that one cannot say how enduring true democracy will be. Indonesia has officially embarked on a policy of 'guided democracy', and the party system applies. But the nation is passing through such a lengthy transition that the outcome is not yet clear. The model is not fixed; the Government has endeavoured to steer clear of entanglements with both the Communist world and the Western world, and yet has shown itself eager to learn what is best from each without becoming beholden to either. The personal leadership of the President is the keystone of the nation still, and it may be some years before some satisfactory

federal system is established or a strong central government imposes itself on the whole nation.

Again, in Thailand democracy formally operates, but the Thais are such past-masters of the art of coups that sudden changes can happen overnight with all the graceful artifice of gentlemen of a bygone age, and the country accepts the change, believing it to be for the better. Thailand is anti-Communist without being securely democratic.

Thus we come back to India as the greatest of the democracies in Asia and increasingly comparable in prestige with the other great democracies of the world. India's Vice-President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, the philosopher-statesman, has expressed his faith in democracy in the words:

Democracy is not merely a form of government—it is a way of life. The working of Parliamentary institutions helps us to acquire qualities of humility and tolerance. In short, it is education in human decency.

His is, without doubt, one of the voices of Asia today.

CHAPTER 5

Communism

Karl Marx offered the world a master-plan that would supersede capitalism, transfer the means of production to the workers of the world, and usher in the classless millennium. This vision of a golden age lit up the horizon of millions who were oppressed by hardship, poverty, and the cruel repercussions of the early Industrial Revolution. The Communism which became the political expression of Marxism has overthrown dynastic absolutisms and feeble republicanism, and has set up a single-party absolutism in their place. Never has history been so globally revolutionary as during this upsurge of Communism, and the end is not in sight.

While the American Revolution was basically political and the French Revolution basically social, the Russian Revolution, which finally launched Communism as an overwhelming force this century, held out the prospect of economic change, and then became powerfully organic and entrenched. It now claims to offer all that the world desires: a better organization of society, the liquidation of all outworn systems of life, an efficient and scientific administrative machine, and the working out of a strategy which must one day conquer the world. That is the offer, and the moral conviction that supports Communism is proof of its tremendous power. This is not difficult to understand when we think of the direct appeal that Communism makes to a sense of justice and the prospect of change. A world that hungers after righteousness will give its allegiance to a creed that offers what sensitized instinct says is right.

'If a man will not work, neither shall he eat.' This condemns the idle rich and is sweet music to the oppressed. It enflames the manual worker with antagonism against his supposedly indolent employer. It breathes the very spirit of righteousness and discipline, and justifies revolt. It is such a cardinal truism that it is written into the Organic Law of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—Greater

Russia. No more honoured place could be given to this statement of principle. Yet where does it come from? It is an exact quotation from the New Testament, the second letter written by St. Paul to the Christian church at Thessalonica. Stalin had not entirely wasted the two years he spent in a theological college as a young man before he switched his calling from the ministry of the Church to the remoulding of Russia.

Asians were among the first to see in Communism a possible solution to the particular problems of their own countries. Sun Yat-sen was sympathetic, and sent Chiang Kai-shek to investigate the new theories and practice, but the latter shied away. The Communist Borodin was lent to the Chinese to 'guide' them in the 1920s. Nehru was mildly attracted at one stage, and wrote a history of Russia in his spare time. Marshal Chu Teh was captivated by Communism when he first met it in Berlin after the First World War, and Teng Hsiao-ping, one of China's five most prominent leaders, turned to Communism in Paris, also at the end of the First World War.

Moscow, the new capital of Russia, symbolized successful change, and thereby heightened expectation in an Asia still controlled by Europe. It seemed as if the Marxist theory of history was one to be believed in and trusted. If it was true that the course of history led from tribalism to slavery on to feudalism, and then to capitalism, and that Communism was the next inevitable stage in an inexorable sequence, then it seemed only sensible in the 1920s to acknowledge that with the overthrow of the Manchus in China, the Romanovs in Russia, the Hohenzollerns in Germany, and the Habsburgs in Austria a new age had been born. Monarchy was evidently on the way out, parliamentary democracy was a doubtful winner, and Communism, built on a hierarchy of soviets, was the latest available alternative.

Lenin's success in establishing it securely, Stalin's transformation of Russia, Russia's ability to withstand Hitler's attack and contribute to his downfall, and, finally, China's unquestioned achievements since 1949 have convinced the world at last that Communism has exceptional strategic power, and a thing of small beginnings has become a juggernaut which frightens half the world.

The vigour of Communism has compelled admiration even from those most bewildered by it. To give a trivial but personal example, I cannot forget visiting the Soviet display at the International Exhibition at Smyrna (Ismir) in Turkey in September 1934. In the intense heat of high noon and early afternoon, the pavilions and marquees of eleven other nations had closed down till later in the

day, but the Soviet marquees were bristling with life. Pots and pans and farm machinery were being shown to swarms of Turks, many of whom had come in from outlying districts and did not wish to miss a single hour of a day's visit to the Exhibition. The Russians were the only people making the most of the opportunity, and one could not but be impressed by their enthusiasm, opportunism, and salesmanship. They were out to impress, and succeeded. The quality of some of the manufactured goods was not of the highest at that time, but there was variety and good arrangement.

In the days between the wars relatively little could be known about Russia, and it was difficult to assess the strides that Russia was making. But everyone knew how powerful was the party system that controlled it, and all-powerful the hand at the helm. Ruling a vast nation from a desk in the Kremlin, and virtually living in isolation from foreign contact, Stalin succeeded in building up a myth, a *mystique*, a legend of superhuman insight and energy which grew as the years passed. The less known as a man, the more exalted he became as a figure—a father-figure to the nation, an apprehension to the world. What was he plotting next? What was he doing to Russia?

This *mystique* created unbounded curiosity, and blended well with the propaganda which suggested that Russia was now the workers' paradise. Thus for many intellectual radicals, political idealists, and 'toiling' millions did Soviet Russia become a symbol of hope and the country to admire. The near-worship of Russia became a new and collective loyalty among wage-earners in many lands, and so Communism spread. For manual workers no more appealing emblem has ever been devised than the simple hammer and sickle, representing industry and agriculture, factory and farm, the fundamentals of all society.

An annual stimulant was provided by the spectacular May Day celebrations, and the propaganda effect of these just cannot be over-emphasized. 1st May, Labour Day, witnessed each year an incredible parade of armed might and massive civilian support through Red Square in Moscow, with Stalin the centre-piece on the saluting base for many years, closely flanked by Molotov, Zhdanov, Kaganovitsch, and others, and later in turn by Malenkov, Bulganin, and Khrushchev as centre-pieces, flanked by Beria, Zhukov, Voroshilov, Mikoyan, and many others, also in turn.

These May Day parades have quickly become an important feature also in Communist China, and again everything is done to reflect great credit on the nation and the Army, and to give proof of progress and might. An air of excitement and holiday mood

pervades the celebrations, and somehow generates an emotional vindication of the régime and its achievements. The Governments of Russia and China lay such store by these demonstrations that they think nothing of spending many weeks in preparation, and regard the time and expenditure as eminently worthwhile. Hundreds of official visitors pour into Moscow and Peking from other lands, and are given a most heart-warming welcome. I have seen an aircraft-load of left-wing Indonesians taking off from the airport at Djakarta, *en route* to witness the May Day parade in Peking, in a mood of high anticipation. Usually such visitors are given the opportunity of sampling many sides of Chinese life, and afforded a tour of various districts, both town and country. They return to their own homes grateful for the new experience, enormously impressed as a rule with what they have seen, indebted to the Chinese Government for such hospitality, and pre-conditioned to explain China and her policies at home.

No other nations have anything that can quite compare with the influence exerted by these parades. The nearest parallels, though on a smaller scale, are religious rather than political—the Muslims pilgrimaging to Mecca, Christians to Jerusalem or Catholics to Rome. Communists know the value of advertisement, and know how to make it popular.

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But all the tokens of strength already mentioned are as nothing to the structural strength of the Soviet system, with the base of the pyramid firmly set on the assumption of near-total obedience and the pinnacle surmounted by a handful of key men who manipulate the Party machine and make the overriding decisions on all vital issues. There is no better way of understanding the incredible unity and discipline exerted by Communism than to read and study the Organic Law or Constitution of Russia. All authority feeds into the centre, and without the sanction of the Central Government or Supreme Soviet all activity is called to account. Moscow, the Kremlin, and the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. become the centre around which Communism must revolve. As the Vatican to the Catholic, so the Supreme Soviet is unquestioned, monolithic authority to the Communist. However much organizations like the Comintern and Cominform, or the Warsaw Pact, may have looked like being semi-independent bodies capable of reaching separate decisions, evidence pointed to the conclusion that they were virtually planning and strategic sub-committees, answerable in reality to the Supreme Soviet.

The practical working out of Communism demands implicit

obedience, no criticism of official principles, and discipline at every level. Therefore, the great dread inherent in Communism is internal disharmony or revolt, technically called 'deviation', for deviation implies a possible alternative, and this to the ardent Communist is unthinkable. For this reason the defection of Yugoslavia from the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet camp in 1948 was a split away which was regarded not only as treacherous, but clearly contrary to the whole basis of Marxist thought. Many attempts have been made to woo back Marshal Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party, but without avail. In the very year, 1948, when Communism under Stalin threatened to become history's next great tyranny, with the seizure of Czechoslovakia and the blockade of Berlin, Tito withdrew his allegiance to Stalin, and the outside world rejoiced at one of the first signs of a crack in the monolithic system. Tito, on the other hand, did not renounce Communism. Nor did he accrue to any Western alliance. He merely contended that he was carrying out the true principles of Marxism in his own country without the personal interference of an outside dictator.

Since then Stalin has died (March 1953), and in 1956 (25th February) at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev created consternation in the Communist and non-Communist world by denouncing the 'cult of personality', accusing Stalin posthumously of self-adulation, barbaric cruelty, and all manner of crimes against the Party. Many immediately thought that he was destroying the reputation and memory-stature of Stalin in order to clear the pedestal for his own elevation, and in many respects Khrushchev now wields even greater personal authority than Stalin ever possessed. Nevertheless, Khrushchev has also taken numerous steps to delegate and regionalize much of the fantastically over-centralized authority which he took over as First Secretary of the Communist Party and later as Prime Minister. He introduced many new reforms, re-shuffled the leaders and offices, semi-retired many of the Old Guard, but with face-saving demotion, tested the calibre of a host of younger potential leaders, and promoted the prestige of Russia by a series of long-distance tours, including India, Burma, Afghanistan (1955), Great Britain (1956), the United States (1959), and Indonesia (1960).

The overall influence of these developments was to give Russia a new self-confidence, a much-needed freedom of spirit after nearly thirty years of suffused fear under Stalin and the aftermath of his death. This welcome period of liberalization was a calculated risk. It involved inevitably the loosening of discipline which had to be carefully watched and checked. It made it possible for Russians to

engage in cultural visits overseas, for foreigners to begin visiting Russia, for trade delegations to operate, and for Russia to enter in earnest into the competitive outside world. One soon began to encounter Russians in Asia, Africa, and America, an almost unthinkable experience in the days of Stalin.

But what did this mean?

Russia soon found herself respected as probably second only to the United States in industrial wealth and power. Her scientific achievements in aircraft production, nuclear development, space conquest, and ability to challenge the West with tenders in the field of heavy industry, architecture, and manufactured goods confirmed her greatness as a nation and her political status in the world.

It was always just possible that national feeling in Eastern Europe might take advantage of the new liberal atmosphere, and assert itself against the octopus grip of the Kremlin. Three months after the death of Stalin came the first eruption, an insurrection in East Germany, quickly crushed by the weight of Russian tanks (June 1953). Three years later came a show of independence in Poland, when Gomulka insisted on the right of Poland to order her own internal affairs. Armed forces threatened to surround Warsaw, and Russian leaders flew into the Polish capital and walked into a Polish Cabinet meeting to bring Gomulka to heel. For a moment it looked as though liberalization had overreached itself, for Gomulka stood his ground, won a measure of independence, and yet managed to reconcile himself with the Kremlin in the ensuing months. A new element of local autonomy had entered into the Communist system, and the principle was quickly noticed elsewhere. Hard on the heels of Poland came a revolt in Hungary (September 1956), and the possible chain-reaction of national self-assertion threatened to spread throughout eastern Europe if swift action were not taken to avert it. The nationalist rising was laid at the door of 'imperialist lackeys' to justify Russian armed suppression, and Hungary was finally brought to account.

The outside world was horrified by the sudden burst of brutality, and mistrusted Russia's protestations of 'peaceful coexistence' for some time later. It took three years to re-establish an atmosphere of 'liberal' trust and confidence. The very size of the Russian armed forces kept up the sense of alarm in the West.

Since the Hungarian revolt of 1956 and the Suez crisis which followed within a few weeks, Russia has been extremely on her guard against similar explosions, military involvements, or diplomatic embarrassments. Her purposes are served far better by peace at home, and economic development and trade abroad. Her fingers

have been burnt too often and too hard to forget it easily. She was left out of the Conference at Bandung, failed to carry off the full diplomatic coup in the Middle East which she intended, discovered Nasser to be more wary of Communist overtures than was expected, and therefore had to look farther afield for fresh pastures to explore.

Since then the situation within the Communist world has altered unbelievably in three important respects. Firstly, recent changes in Russia have indicated a decided swing away from pure doctrinaire Marxist-Leninism. Secondly, China has become the major Communist country, sounder in ideology than Russia, and in many ways has taken over the initiative from her political partner. Thirdly, the interrelationship between the two is historically secure for the moment, and mutually beneficial, but is not without countless points of tension and soft-pedalled rivalry.

Let us consider the three, briefly, in turn.

Firstly, can Russia much longer be considered strictly a Communist State? Control is vested in a leadership which represents both the Party and the Army, and through these bodies power expresses itself in ways which directly vitiate the high principles of Communist theory. Privilege has crept back in force, and time and responsibility together have created a bureaucratic *élite* which now rules Russia more firmly than did the old aristocracy. Party office and Government ranking now carry with them all manner of preferential benefits, and salary differentials are wider than in most capitalist countries. Now that merit is evaluated in terms of effective loyalty and contribution to the Party, as well as personal efficiency, the early vision of a classless millennium has receded almost out of sight. The Western mind, brought up to believe that Communism demands the principle of social equality, is befuddled to hear of select schools for the children of privileged Communist leaders, and to experience travel in ships and other transport carefully graded from *de luxe* and first-class downwards. The Westerner is tempted to think that old conventions, traditions, and standards are breaking surface again, and are mellowing an allegedly Communist nation into just another successful Socialist state.

Secondly, the second half of the twentieth century is already witnessing the overwhelming power of China, and no one can foresee what this meteoric recovery of China portends. The final military victories in 1949 of the People's Liberation Army over the Quomintang forces swept all before them, and by the end of the year the entire mainland, except Tibet, was securely Communist controlled.

At 2 p.m. on 1st October 1949 the Council of the Central People's Government took office in Peking, and an hour later Mao Tse-tung read the proclamation inaugurating the new Republic, and hoisted the new national flag—the red flag with five stars.

For the next few years the Communist régime consolidated itself in power, virtually cut off from the outside world, in order to concentrate on internal affairs, sent 'volunteer' forces to the help of North Korea during the Korean War, and then began to engulf Tibet. The year 1954 was a landmark, for in that year Communist China felt sufficiently certain of her internal political stability and military preparedness to allow Chou En-lai to attend an international meeting in Geneva to help to settle the Civil War in Vietnam. It was halfway through this conference that Chou En-lai broke his journey at Delhi to discuss with Pandit Nehru the question of Tibet, and concluded a Sino-Indian Pact, one article of which enunciated the principle of peaceful coexistence. For the first time Communist China was out in the public arena, in the full glare of international limelight, and was showing herself reasonable and conciliatory. Russia was clearly immensely proud of her 'junior' partner, and could not possibly foresee that within a year China would have stolen the thunder and captured the initiative in east and South-East Asia. China was invited to the Bandung Conference; Russia was not; therefore, China became at one bounce the official spokesman for the entire Communist world at this historic Afro-Asian conference. By exemplary geniality, astuteness, and forbearance, Chou En-lai characterized the new might of China, and the world suddenly awoke to this.

The offended party was Russia, and what was she to do? In the persons of Marshal Bulganin, Prime Minister, and Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party, Russia attended a summit Conference at Geneva, and was once again headline news, which implied diplomatic initiative. This was quickly followed by the announcement of an arms deal with Egypt, which quickly brought Russia into the midst of Middle East politics and on the side of Nasser, who was bidding hard for Arab national leadership and needed proof of Great Power support. Thirdly, Bulganin and Khrushchev set off on a diplomatic tour of India, Burma, and Afghanistan, to pave the way for closer association and goodwill between the respective countries, somehow to compensate for exclusion at Bandung and reassert the supremacy of Russian leadership in the Communist parts of the world. But nothing Russia can do will really displace China's influence in South and South-East Asia.

Chou En-lai carried out an extensive tour in 1956 of South Asian countries, and showed infinitely more harmony and goodwill than did Bulganin and Khrushchev on theirs. He was in no hurry, and therefore saw more, and was far more courteous and thorough in his visitations. Before his tour was over the Hungarian crisis had broken out, and an unexpected turn of events put China in the forefront again. Russia, in desperate need of an ally and encouragement after incurring the moral wrath of world opinion, called for China's ideological support in her dilemma, and China seized the opportunity of sending several of her leaders to Russia, and thus appeared as the strong and timely friend in need, the rescuer of Russia from the gnashings of world anger. Furthermore, the Chinese did more than confer with their Russian opposites and issue a statement of unity and solidarity. They visited several capitals in eastern Europe and met other Communist leaders, and thus may be said to have made a definite impact on that part of the Communist world in which they had hitherto had little direct contact.

The next year, 1957, promised to be one of easement in ideological outlook. Mao Tse-tung expressed the wish, 'Let a hundred flowers blossom', and this was taken to mean that ideas of every kind might now be freely expressed which hitherto had been held in check for reasons of political expediency. Writers, poets, university teachers, intellectuals generally felt free to air their opinions. But in this they assumed too much and overstepped the mark. For several months they spoke and wrote and thought with a spirit of relaxation, not unpatriotically in the strict sense, but nevertheless out of step with Communist directive. Universities and students in particular showed a tendency to air too much independence of view. Suddenly, after about eight months of relaxation, the Government stepped in, accusing many individuals of rightist views and 'deviationism'; many of the arrested disappeared, and a rectification campaign was set in motion. Thus the Peking Government had discovered where criticism of the régime existed, how extensive it was, how quick it was to seize a chance of becoming vocal, and the Government had tested its own ability to silence the criticism. The prospect of any revival of the liberal spirit was given a shattering setback, and the world noted with dismay the brutality and with disquiet the evident and astonishing control of the nation by the Central Government.

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It is not merely what happens inside China which is of unbounded interest to the outside world, but the means China has of extending

her Communist influence into neighbouring countries. The entire reach of South-East Asia from Burma to Indonesia is apprehensive of Chinese penetration, and the reasons are not far to seek. Historically and ancestrally many of these peoples had their origin in or near China. At the present time between 12 and 15 million Chinese are scattered over the area. Some are known to be Communist, others non-Communist, while many are wise not to commit themselves, but await the turn of events. These 'overseas' Chinese can be regarded as a potential fifth column, and all sides know it. Many of them have come from Kwangtung and other maritime provinces, the colonizing Chinese. Some have been educated in modern China and are immensely proud of recent achievements in China, and of the future that seems to be opening up. Privately they long for an extension of influence, a Greater China, and many work for that day. Can it ever happen?

The answer lies quite as much in the character of the people as in any objective of political or racial ambition. The Chinese are fundamentally active, practical, and alert. They drive themselves, are methodical and immensely far-sighted. In these respects they differ from the indolence, casualness, and temperamental lethargy of many of the people among whom they live, and therefore they do not find it difficult to work themselves into occupations where hard work is required and industry well rewarded. Thus all over South-East Asia shops and businesses are increasingly coming into the hands of Chinese, and in turn the Chinese become valuable members of the community and quickly well established. Thrift soon makes them financially comfortable, and often wealthy, and their hold on trade and commerce may soon make them potentially very influential. The step from commercial influence to a demand for appropriate political influence is not necessarily a great one, but a demand not to be requested or forced before the time. Virtues of patience and calculation keep them content betimes.

It is easy to exaggerate the case either way: to say that a virile Chinese minority in a country is no potential liability, or to over-emphasize the risk of it. I have heard the strongest possible arguments put forward on both sides of the case in Thailand, Singapore, and Indonesia, and, as always in such arbitrary issues, one is left to judge for oneself.

Great pains were once taken to convince me that the Chinese were thoroughly integrated in a particular country in South-East Asia, and therefore the minority issue was as good as resolved and cause for official watchfulness really no longer existed. The arguments put forward were that the Chinese were perfectly content,

enjoyed great freedom, lived to themselves, and were no political embarrassment; in many cases families had lived in the country for generations. That was the complacent and one-half-of-the-truth side of the situation. Evidence on the other side was certainly difficult to accumulate and assess, but traceable and detectable, nevertheless. The Chinese were becoming more than ever careful not to marry outside their own circle. The children were being brought up to know and understand Chinese again. The Chinese newspapers, of which there were a number, were becoming less critical of Communist China, while still being careful not to approve her ways. The Chinese newspapers, it is true, had a small circulation by Western standards, but so had the main national newspapers. Furthermore, if the circulations of the Chinese newspapers were totalled up together, their influence could not be lightly dismissed.

For these and other reasons, the time may come when the presence and activity of so many 'overseas' Chinese in the long peninsula from south of Thailand to Singapore and beyond may produce a weakening of the present Indian and Malay culture, and a strengthening of the Chinese impact. It will be deeper than any clash of politics, for the conflict contains strong elements of race within it, and the clash will be one of civilizations, old, but new. To what extent Communism will be able to exploit this situation it is too early to say. The overseas Chinese, with Singapore as their fulcrum, may be capable of exerting an increasing influence throughout South-East Asia, and yet put into operation a programme of radical Socialism which does not necessarily involve a rapprochement of any sort with China itself. Many Chinese would wish it so.

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Strategically, Communism holds one trump card. This is China's non-membership of U.N.O., which enables China to complain vigorously that she is wrongfully excluded from the family of nations, and at the same time enables her to ignore any representations whatsoever which U.N.O. may put forward. To have the best of both worlds is China's lot at present. She can suffer from injured pride with the satisfaction of independence, and go her own sweet way without regard to rebuke from other nations. We will return to this matter in a later chapter on internationalism.

CHAPTER 6

Socialism

Socialism in Asia is a relatively new and potent factor, less than half understood. It is claimed by both democracy and Communism alike to be the social, economic, and political stage in history towards which both are working, and this double claim needs explanation.

Let us begin with a survey of the recent organization of the Socialist movement. After the Second World War trade union leaders from all over the world succeeded in forming the World Federation of Trade Unions, and from the outset this body included Russia, Britain, and the United States. The Congress of Industrial Organizations in the United States joined the new international body, but the American Federation of Labour decided to hold aloof. Throughout the early years, and in spite of efforts to conciliate, continuous friction existed between Communists and non-Communists in the new World Federation. The so-called Cold War in Europe intensified the conflict and such events as the Berlin Blockade of 1948-9 and suggestions for the formation of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization merely provided more fuel for argument and bitterness. A break-away became inevitable, and occurred early in 1949. A realignment of international Socialism followed remarkably quickly. In December 1949 in London an entirely new body was formed called the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U.), with delegates from fifty-three countries representing seventy major trade union organizations. This time both the American parent bodies joined, the C.I.O. (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and the A.F.L. (American Federation of Labour).

By the beginning of 1960 the I.C.F.T.U. had a membership of nearly 56 million drawn from no less than ninety-seven countries, and it is estimated that more than 6 million of these members are

Asians. The aims of the I.C.F.T.U. are mainly threefold: to improve the standard of living of workers in every land, to advance political and economic freedom, and to work for lasting peace. These aims are reflected in the slogan of the Confederation: 'Bread, peace, freedom.'

The I.C.F.T.U. has its headquarters in Brussels, but there are regional offices in many parts of the world. Asia is particularly well represented in this respect, for there is an Asian Regional Organization Headquarters in Delhi, and offices in Singapore, Tokyo, Djakarta, and Beirut. Outside Asia I.C.F.T.U. offices are situated in Geneva, Paris, New York, Mexico, Port of Spain, Rio de Janeiro, Nairobi, and Accra. In Calcutta, as also in Kampala in Uganda, is a trade union college attached to the I.C.F.T.U.

Thus international Socialism has developed a well-organized secretariat all over the world, with a recognized status and close-knit affiliation, a growing membership, sound financial backing from trade union bodies, and an influence which may seldom hit the headlines, but is none the less important.

Meanwhile, the World Federation of Trade Unions (W.F.T.U.) is now entirely a Communist organization, and the two bodies are pitted against each other in purpose, policy, and personnel. The I.C.F.T.U. is in fact one of the hurdles which hinders the progress of Communism in South Asia, though it never attracts publicity. Many of the ablest politicians in the whole area have been much more ready to identify themselves with doctrinaire Socialism rather than doctrinaire Marxism, partly because experience has taught them to become suspicious of the methods of Communism.

Communism has claimed that by strict economic planning it can transform society from backwardness and semi-feudalism in a matter of two or three decades to a new pitch of advanced civilization, given but one condition—the active co-operation and unquestioning obedience of the entire community. It is at this point of overall control and enforcement of policy that Asian Socialism raises its vigorous protest and takes a distinctive stand in India, Burma, Ceylon, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, and elsewhere. Over and over again Asian Socialists have declared their abhorrence of super-control or excessive direction, which themselves threaten freedom. A typical pronouncement is that of the Indonesian Socialist Party: 'Socialism is completely opposed to monopolistic capitalism and to any kind of totalitarian planning. . . . Socialist planning does not mean that all economic decisions must be in the hands of the government.'

In Europe Socialism began largely as a reaction to capitalism following the Industrial Revolution. The same is not true in Asia, for many Asian nations are only now passing through the phases of industrial development which in turn created the conditions for the emergence of Socialism in Europe. Capitalism will always be blamed for anything that can conveniently be laid at its door—the exploitation of labour, poverty, unemployment, poor living conditions, and every manner of economic distress. Thus Socialism advances as the champion of a programme of reform, and beckons to itself every prospect and panacea of uplift, social well-being, justice, and equality. It moves from resentment to attack, and then on to positive programmes.

But in Asia the impetus has been different, and far more complicated. It is best to let a leader of Socialism in Asia, Alex Josey, describe it as he sees it:

Asian Socialism is not simple to define, for it is a compound of sensitive, if not aggressive, nationalism; fierce and ever-watchful opposition to any form of imperialistic or totalitarian colonialism; resentment against the material and educational poverty which colonialism produced; and an urgent, if not always a coherent, determination to achieve rapid economic development through a mass collective effort based upon democracy, justice, and the maximum of personal freedom. These, of course, in addition to a wider concern for social welfare, a belief in equality and the classless society, and an ideal of fraternity and co-operation. Negative reaction towards capitalism is slight because capitalism in the East, except that exploited by Western colonialists, is almost unknown. Thus Socialists and nationalists generally—and in Asia a Socialist is first a nationalist—automatically opposed capitalism because they opposed colonialism with which it was associated.

In 1947, the year in which India attained her independence, an Inter-Asian Relations Conference was held in Delhi, and the convening of an Asian Socialist Conference was suggested. Nothing came of the idea for a time, until in March 1952 a meeting took place in Rangoon at which representatives of the Socialist parties in India, Indonesia, and Burma decided to form a permanent organization and issued a joint statement to clarify their objectives. It read as follows:

Socialism and the Socialist movement started in the Western world as a logical consequence and opponent of capitalism.

Capitalism based on the profit motive gave birth to imperialism and colonialism. It has not been able to provide means for the emancipation of the masses. It is a form of exploitation of man by man. Cominform Communism denies in practice the dignity and equality of man.

Its views and convictions cannot be separated from the position of Soviet Russia, which it regards as a bulwark. Cominformists are essentially merely the vanguard, observers, and informers of Soviet Russia.

In the Cominform countries there exists a dictatorship of the Cominform parties, employing methods of terror of the secret police, which is also felt in the sphere of production.

For these reasons the Asian Socialist parties reject both capitalism and Communism. Employing the methods of analysis used by Marx and Engels with regard to the development and the organization of capitalist society and taking into consideration the peculiar historical economic development in Asia as compared to that in the Western world, the Socialist parties agree on the following principles and objectives:

1. Socialism believes in planned production for use of society and not for the profit of a few. It believes that means of production, distribution, and exchange should belong to the people. Socialist planning is opposed to totalitarian planning, as it provides no guarantee for popular controls of production and adequate and just distribution of proceeds.

2. Socialism believes in social justice for the people. It believes in giving people the right to employment, the right to medical care, the right to old age pensions, and the right of children to proper education and care. These rights can be implemented only if production is for use of society and not the profit of a few: that is to say, these rights can only be implemented under a Socialist economy.

3. The Socialist economy shall be a planned economy which will consist of two sectors: a nationalized sector and a co-operative sector. While a private sector will be permitted in the transitional stage, the objective of Socialist planning will be to widen the nationalized and co-operative sectors progressively.

4. Socialism believes in political democratic rights of people: that is to say, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of faith, and rule through elected bodies. While preserving the right to defend democracy, Socialism permits the existence of opposition political

parties. It is opposed to capitalist democracy, because capitalist democracy provides political rights only and not social rights.

5. Socialism believes that people should enjoy not only political rights, but also social rights, which can be enjoyed only in a society based on Socialist economy.

6. Socialism believes in democratic administrative machinery as opposed to bureaucratic administrative machinery.

7. Socialism believes in international co-operation and peace based on justice.

8. Socialism believes in a world where man enjoys all the material benefits of civilization as provided by highly developed science and technique, free from fear of unemployment or starvation, fear of illness, fear of insecurity in old age, fear of insecurity for children and family. It believes in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

9. In view of the existence of the backwardness and state of underdevelopment, the wide spread of poverty, agrarian economy, which are the consequences of colonialism and feudalism in the major part of Asia, the Socialist parties will aim, in addition to the principles stated above, at the complete emancipation of the broad masses of Asia.

This joint statement, circulated to Socialist bodies in Asia and beyond, led in due course to the convening of an Asian Socialist Conference in Rangoon in January 1953 to draw up a constitution and organize support. The conference was attended by delegations from Socialist parties from Japan, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Burma, the Lebanon, Israel, Nepal, and Egypt. The meeting even attracted representatives from as far away as Kenya, Uganda, Tunisia, and Algeria, as well as Malaya, and international Socialism was represented by Mr. Clement Atlee (now Earl Atlee), André Bidet, and Kaj Bjork.

The Conference established an organization with headquarters in Rangoon, and declared that:

The purposes of the Asian Socialist Conference are:

- (a) To strengthen relations between the Asian Socialist parties.
- (b) To co-ordinate their political attitudes by consent.
- (c) To establish closer relations with Socialist parties in all the world.
- (d) To establish a liaison with the Socialist International.

This first Conference had something to say on nearly all vital issues concerned with land reform, co-operatives, agricultural

finance, collective farms, mechanization, electrification, cottage industries, experimental farms, mass organization, and agrarian reform in the hills, and thus gave a lead to Socialist parties throughout Asia.

The second Conference was held in Bombay in November 1956 at one of the most critical moments in post-war history when the atmosphere was still poisoned by the memory of Soviet tanks in Hungary and the complicated fiasco of the Suez War. Under the chairmanship of U Ba Swe, the then Burmese Prime Minister, delegates foregathered from India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Japan, Indonesia, Burma, Cambodia, Nepal, Malaya, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Israel, but there were no delegates from Syria or the Lebanon. A number of Socialists also attended from European and African countries.

The three nations which in one sense counted for most during the deliberations were the countries which were governed by Socialist parties or predominantly Socialist coalitions—Israel, Burma, and Ceylon. The Israel delegation was under a cloud because of the Suez War, and at first they were thought to be a doubtful asset at the Conference, but as time passed their contribution in committee became more and more valuable, and the Conference very much warmed to the Israelis when it became known that Israel's Labour Party, *Mapai*, had offered to invite 250 Socialists, in two groups—one of fifty and the other of 200—to visit Israel as their guests to study the co-operative movement.

Other prominent Socialist spokesmen were Mr. Solomon W. R. D. Bandaranaike, then Prime Minister of Ceylon, who looked forward to a combination of democratic Socialism and religio-cultural ideas as the best means of bringing about an uplift in backward Asian countries, Sutan Sjahrir, a former Prime Minister of Indonesia and Chairman of the Indonesian Socialist Party, who stressed the urgency of Socialism replacing Communism as the hope for the East, Inajiro Asanuma, Secretary-General of the Socialist Party of Japan, who spoke with optimism of a future Socialist Japan and the role it would play, Jayaprakash Narayan, one of the founders of the Praja Socialist Party of India, who was largely theoretical and idealistic in his speeches about the distribution of wealth and the relation of the individual to the State, and B. P. Koilara, leader of the Nepal delegation.

It was clear at the Bombay Conference that Socialist principles varied from country to country—some more revolutionary and some more evolutionary than others. In Malaya, for example, Socialism found it difficult to gather momentum, and the Prime

Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, warned university students against the temptation of trying to change the Malayan way of life by anything drastic or sudden.

So far the influence of the Asian Socialist Conference cannot be said to have had any great impact in South and South-East Asia, and the reasons are not far to see. Many governments are already headed in the general direction of a mild Socialist creed, but the Socialism is so blended with nationalism that the latter sings the tune and takes the credit. An example is India, where the Prime Minister, Pandit Nehru, frequently explains what he means by a Socialist pattern of society and maintains that he is working to that end. For Pandit Nehru society must become co-operative, and bit by bit the acquisitive and selfish elements in society must be corrected and eliminated. Less and less must it be possible for the poor to be in a position to be exploited by the rich. There should be room in society for private enterprise, to stimulate incentive, and the relationship between the private sector and the public sector was one which had to be watched and adjusted continuously. The State had to ensure that it was under pressure from no monopoly or vested interest, but free to safeguard the best interests of the community as a whole. Pandit Nehru himself believes in economic planning, and much of this follows a Socialist pattern. He takes the view that rapid industrialization alone will develop and increase the national wealth sufficiently to carry out the further stages of progress in the general economy of the country. The means whereby India hopes to develop along the right lines are through the village *panchayat*, service co-operatives, and the village school so far as the rural areas are concerned. But the one principle upon which Pandit Nehru puts considerable store is that the impulse behind these changes should be voluntary. High-handed compulsion does not square with his ideas of democracy or Socialism, and, again, these two are also blended. Vinoba Bhave and the *Bhoodan* movement are much more to his taste than 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. It is therefore possible that India may one day prove to be the model semi-Socialist alternative to totalitarian Communism in Asia.

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Meanwhile, there are still some in high office politically in Asia who find it hard to accept the fact that Western capitalism has had to come to terms with varying degrees of Socialism from the days of the New Deal in the United States to the Welfare State in Britain, and that the outlook on life in Western society is now

radically different from life even twenty or thirty years ago. Socialism has broken deep into capitalist society.

K. M. Pannikar has given us an admirable account of the nature and significance of this change in his book, *The Two Faces of China*. He was Indian Ambassador in Peking in the transition period from Nationalist China to Communist China, and relates how at a dinner party Mr. Chou En-lai spoke to him of the ultimate and inevitable collapse of capitalist nations, in accordance with Marxist doctrine. It was only a matter of time before revolutionary change came to the decadent nations of the West. K. M. Pannikar then tried to explain that on a recent visit to Britain he had realized with amazement that Britain had passed through precisely such a revolution, and had become a Welfare State. In 1948 the health service of the nation had virtually been nationalized. It was now the legal right of every citizen to have free medical attention, free surgery when needed, and dental care. Free education up to the age of fifteen was already the case, and education was compulsory. Financial assistance was available to all in distress, whether through infirmity, sickness, or incapacity. In fact, the stage had been reached wherein no one had any excuse to want for food, shelter, clothing, or advice if hard hit by unemployment, old age, or misfortune. Acute poverty was abolished, care for the nation's health ensured, and improved educational facilities had opened the way to greater occupational opportunity. The entire nation was involved, rich and poor alike, without respect to private means or inherited resources. What was offered was the same for all: the principle of equality had arrived in the spheres of medical treatment and provision of education. This was almost incredible in a country so traditional, conventional, and in some ways hide-bound as Britain. How could it have happened? Was it the outcome of years of political struggle and acrimony? Had bloodshed accompanied the determination of the reformers, and severity pressurized the opponents? Had this social revolution been brought about by, or paved the way for, extreme left-wing dominance in Britain?

Chou En-lai could probably scarcely believe his ears as K. M. Pannikar unfolded the truth about the silent revolution in the West which had missed the news in the East.

Years of careful thought lay behind the revolution. Sir William Beveridge (later Lord Beveridge) had headed an enquiry which investigated the social conditions that most needed remedying, and the recommendations were placed before the Government of the day. The Second World War delayed any prompt action, but

helped in more subtle ways, for the war itself, by unifying the nation and throwing all classes of society together in the hour of need, did in fact bring about a social revolution of its own. Appreciation and understanding of each other's character and contribution generated a more progressive and enlightened sense of the common weal. By and large, public opinion supported the principles that could create the Welfare State, in which the benefits of protection and care were considerably more advanced than anything already in vogue. Thus the Education Act of 1944 and the Health Service Act of 1948 go down together in history as legislative measures exceeding the victory value of many a military battle, and not a drop of blood spilt. A National Government, Conservative-led, initiated the first measure. A Socialist Government pushed through the second. Sir William Beveridge was a Liberal. The Welfare State, therefore, may be said to have been the expression of the general will of the nation, not imposed from above, but reflecting the mood of the majority. Furthermore, the onus of bearing responsibility for its implementation fell on every adult in employment in the country. All paid a financial contribution, deducted from wages and salaries, and all employers paid a share of this contribution. There was no escaping the levy, even for the self-employed. This, then, is the outline of the silent revolution that changed the condition of life for many in Britain in 1948, with none of the violence of France in 1789, 1848, and 1871, Russia in 1905 and 1917, or China in 1949. It was a triumph, not basically for any one party, but for radicalism and practical idealism, and the lesson of 'revolution by legislation' has not escaped the notice of the new democracies of South Asia. The successful working of five-year plans does not have to be preceded by bloodshed, and the principles of the Welfare State, which some like to claim as a victory for State Socialism, can be put into effect by any enlightened government so long as it can expect a high degree of co-operation from its citizens.

This is precisely where the snags arise. The prevailing conditions of life in most South Asian lands are still those of poverty, illiteracy, undernourishment, and underdevelopment. The cure for most of these involves phenomenal capital investment and capital expenditure, which in turn have to be given or attracted from outside. Ironically, the position is reached, as certain political economists remind us, that Asian Welfare States, and anything approaching Asian Socialism, can only be built up on the basis of increased capitalism in the economic sense. Industrialization, if encouraged as at present both from the private and the public sectors in many

countries, can increase the flow of capital, and then with increasing productivity and prosperity a careful fiscal policy can support some measure of State welfare or State Socialism. But at present throughout South Asia it is national parties which are carrying through semi-Socialist policies, and Socialist parties as such are not yet strong enough to capture the reins of government.

The reasons for this are varied: trade unionism is not the overwhelming force it is in the West; national parties are older, more experienced, entrenched and identified with the earlier struggle for political emancipation; Asian Socialism lacks those descriptive catch-phrases which were once the appeal of nationalism or Communism. As with Communism, so to a lesser degree with Socialism there is a suspicion that it leads to a fixed social order guided solely by those in authority, and this in turn can lead to a party or personal dictatorship. To find a formula which can satisfactorily combine all that is best in democratic Socialism and yet retain the stir of nationalism and the rights of personal freedom is not only the endeavour of governments in general, but of the Asian Socialist movement in particular.

CHAPTER 7

Revolution

Revolutions, for the historian, are a fascinating study, and as complex as any other principle of change. Whether the cost in human terms is light or heavy, a revolution is not worthy of the name unless it brings about some authentic and detectable change. The purpose of a revolution may arise out of a score of motives or pressures, positive and negative. The mood may vary from cool calculation to the white heat of vengeance; methods and techniques range from temperamental outburst to developed art. For some it is even a science, following a set pattern, honoured by previous success. The whole outlook on life is affected, and the repercussions come in like the tide, over and over again. Language, clothes, occupation, standards of living, intellectual climate, and cultural influences are all touched by revolution in the end, quite as much as politics. Some revolutions are violent, nauseating and regrettable; others are constitutional, seemly or clever; yet others are elusive, gradual and difficult to define. In Asia the choice is limitless, for every imaginable kind of revolution has happened.

It may be well to begin with the respectable sort; it may even come as a surprise to think of any revolution as respectable. But Thailand is an exception to many rules, and her approach to revolution may be another. On the surface Thailand has some of the qualities of a charmed life, giving the impression of unruffled normality, a society in which convention and tradition operate supreme. The tensions and pressures that do exist are held sufficiently in check to beguile others into thinking that they scarcely count at all. A confident exterior, the hall-mark of authority and respectability, cloaks many a subtle move or overthrow. So many factors have to be taken into account. Loyalty to the throne, lynch-pin of national life, must not be disturbed. The day-to-day life of the people must be as unaffected as possible. Therefore, the more

sudden and expeditious the revolution the better for all concerned, a *fait accompli* being the best of all. To this end, the plan of operations has to be worked out to the last vital detail, secrecy and security are paramount, astrologists are often consulted to determine the most propitious timing, and in this way many a coup has been carried through with clock-like precision and incomparable efficiency. The nation has bowed to the inevitable. Less easily comprehensible, perhaps, to the Western mind is the fact that the people most likely to suffer by removal, banishment, or temporary inconvenience are usually warned just in time so that they may either fall into line with the plan or lie low till the crisis has blown over. Could generosity go any further than to warn the target of personal danger and allow him a way of escape? This is more than gentle altruism or political gesture; it is the tradition of 'face-saving' put into practice and carried to its logical conclusion, personal consideration at its calculated best. No one is made to seem at a disadvantage, and personal pride is left intact, however possible.

In such a system of society a revolution can happen in a day, be officially confirmed within hours, and find tacit acceptance in the passivity of the public. It sounds dangerously simple, but is in fact a highly complicated technique, requiring the support of the military and the police, in addition to an appeal to certain vested interests.

A much-respected Thai who is a former Member of Parliament once enthralled me in Bangkok with a description of the pattern of just such a revolution. In the case of a Cabinet reshuffle, the outgoing Ministers would be given minimum notice, a matter of minutes or hours. Modern methods of transport would whisk them safely away. The strong hold of Buddhism on the minds of the people would be a safeguard against violence or assassination. Taking life is abhorrent to Buddhists. No sooner have the outgoing Ministers departed than the new leaders take over, and the coup is virtually completed, bloodless and final. But the public must be acquainted of the event, and this also must be done in seemly fashion, gently, in stages, and with sanction. The national radio calmly announces that an important statement is soon to be made, this usually being just after the coup is effected, it being now known that the plan has succeeded. Normal radio programmes go off the air as a token of impending change, and joyful music takes their place. Quite shortly it is solemnly announced that in the national interest a Cabinet reshuffle has been found necessary, and the details will be released an hour or two later. This keeps the nation in a sober state of suspense, huddled near radio sets and quietly

waiting, all of which makes it easier for the Army and police to maintain law and order. Then comes the actual news of the persons involved and the announcement that they are about to have an audience of the King. This last item of news adds the necessary flavour of respectability, and is quickly followed by the playing of patriotic music to give the impression of sanction. Subsequent bulletins feed the nation with reassurance and details, until the people go to bed content that the day, however eventful, has at least passed quietly away without the hideous incidents and loss of life that somehow afflict other nations.

Though I have never been in Thailand at quite the right moment to experience such a coup, I was once in Bangkok when a financial crisis happened literally overnight. The announcement took everyone by surprise, and all prices suddenly went up, but the crisis and its impact were accepted in fatalistic fashion, and the people geared themselves afresh to the new decrees. I took my host and hostess out to supper that night, and had cause to realize what a financial crisis can mean.

Qualities both of virtue and liability belie such sudden and bloodless revolutions, and only in a fool's paradise can such a pattern or technique be accepted nowadays as constitutionally sound. As has already been said, Thailand is an exception. It is one of the few monarchies left in Asia, still deeply religious, superstitious, and traditional. Industry and factory life in the Western sense have only lightly touched the country, and an atmosphere of sociability, tranquil satisfaction, and favour envelops the people. In generations past the British and French agreed unilaterally not to attack or partition it, but to recognize it as a kind of buffer State. For this reason, more than any other, Thailand maintained its independence at a period of history in which the rest of the peninsula of South-East Asia, from the border with China to the island of Singapore, was under the colonial control of either Britain or France. The pride and prestige of Siam, as it was then better known, were secure. When the Japanese arrived in 1942 the nation capitulated, thus saving themselves destruction and defeat, but accepting an ignominy which could be borne for a while. After 1945 Thailand became what Thailand means, the 'land of the free'. Nevertheless, Trojan horse methods can be uncommonly dangerous, especially to the unsuspecting and docile, and can be the way in for despotisms.

In utter contrast was the Communist revolution in China, which from slow, tenuous beginnings eventually gathered momentum until it could seize the country by force of arms. Throughout the 1920s

the Communist Party in China was in the cell stage, studying Marxist ideology, noting every success in Russia, and patiently biding the time. The failure of Nationalist China to stop the Japanese conquest of Manchuria gave the Communists a valid excuse to attack the Government, accuse it of feeble intent, and bring themselves to notice as a growing opposition, as Chiang Kai-shek well knew. To seize an enclave in south-west China and proclaim a rebel government was the first stage in gaining political experience. The Long March or Retreat of 6,000 miles undertaken by the Red Army between October 1934 to October 1935 from Kiangsi, through Hunan, Kweichow and Yunnan to Szechwan, Kansu and Shensi, was, as we see in retrospect, the crucible in which Chinese Communism was changed from relatively inexperienced idealism into practical politics. Neither Hannibal's march over the Alps nor Napoleon's retreat from Moscow can compare favourably with it in distance, fortitude, or success. Everything was put to the test—personal sacrifice, the loyalty of humble soldiers, theorists and intellectuals, the appeal of Communism to the rural areas, and the degree of opposition to be further encountered. The lessons of that Long March were taken to heart, and leaders were thrown up in the process who helped to govern China from 1949 right on into the 1960s. They were the pioneers, the heroes, who toughened their ideas and spirit under fire, and proved their administrative ability through discipline when the day of control arrived. Meanwhile, in the war against Japan from 1937 to 1945 they fought the common enemy, learnt more of the arts of war, recruited and trained fresh armies, and established themselves in many areas. For a short time the Communists coalesced with the National Government to present a unified front in the day of recovery from war, but it was an uneasy and unreal alliance. Pledges were given, but confidence on both sides was withheld. China was split in two with little prospect of coming together. Russia was still dubious about support for the Chinese Communists, for, in spite of their accumulating success militarily and territorially, their basic doctrine of revolution with agrarian support was heterodox in Marxist theory, which relied on industrial discontent and upheaval. Chinese Communists, therefore, had to fend for themselves on the whole, a situation which had the merit of making their revolution genuinely nationalistic as well as ideological. The Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek, on the other hand, forfeited their claim to be nationalists, not only because many of them fell to intrigue and corruption, but equally because they depended overmuch on a foreign power, the United States. In wartime, to be helped by the United States as

allies in arms against Japan was one thing. To have received advice and economic aid in the aftermath of war was sensible and justifiable, a rich nation helping a stricken friend. But matters went further than this. The bogey of Communism so affected America that Chiang Kai-shek became virtually the protégé of the United States, and this ultimately weakened the stature of the Generalissimo in the eyes of multitudes of Chinese. It is not the nature of true nationalism to have to depend on foreign support; such nationalism is a contradiction in terms, and cannot survive. Meanwhile, Communism gained validity and respectability as the real dynamic force the more Chiang Kai-shek leaned to America. The military campaigns of 1948 and 1949 soon settled the issue, to the surprise of Russia, the immediate alarm of the Western world, and the subdued quiescence of the neutralist nations, who were doing their best to remain free of big power entanglements.

But this uphill struggle, costly and difficult as it was, does not convey any sense of the real strategy, opportunism, and brilliant cleverness that went into its achievement. Let one incident speak for itself.

The capture of the city of Shanghai, one of the final and crucial victories, was carried out by Communist armies which were undernourished, worn, and unpaid for weeks. But their leadership and enthusiasm won the day. In three simple steps, they riveted themselves in occupation and power.

First, the Communist commander ordered that all employees in the city be given an immediate rise in wages of 10 per cent. This unexpected benefit eased the shock of battle, won over the sympathy of thousands of workers to the invading force, and showed unmistakably that the Communists were taking sides against the employers, thus driving a wedge deep into the heart of the community. There was no escaping the order to pay—public utilities, firms, and shops having to comply.

The second step was a suggestion that the 10 per cent. rise in pay might be lodged in voluntary savings, and this had its benevolent effect. Countless Chinese who were in debt, and some who had small chance of ever ridding themselves of debt, saw the Communist directive as a fatherly counsel, a beneficent insurance opportunity. It appealed to the instinctive sense of thrift, and the people immediately responded.

The third step was easy: the voluntary savings were made compulsory. The Communists who had marched into Shanghai with coffers empty had now a steady revenue levied on business and trade, a contented army with its back-pay made up, a pro-

letariat beguiled by a promise of change, and a *bourgeoisie* stupefied by new and devastating methods. The toll of suicides was the price of their despair.

Could any seizure of power be more complete, combining all the elements, military, economic, ideological, and social? What answer had democracy to such methods? Communism is not always so successful, and has very often failed in its purpose, but here is a breath-taking example of fantastic cleverness which it is well to know about.

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Then there is the kind of revolution that drags on and on without any wholly satisfactory culmination for a long time. Eventually the complex of forces resolves itself, but not until uncertainty has clouded the mind and drift has become a habit. Even this situation, however, does not prevent a nation coming to maturity; it may retard and bedevil it, but cannot altogether arrest development.

One might cite Pakistan as a case in point, for Pakistan took nine years to work out a Constitution, which even then was contested as unworkable. The partition from India was tragically painful, but achieved. The severance from the leading-reins of Britain was smooth enough. But the business of crystallizing the character and integrity of the new nation within the framework of a formal Constitution bewitched the authorities, though it did not stop the nation trying to forge ahead in almost all other respects. Nevertheless, successive governments failed to bring political fulfilment to the Pakistan of Jinnah, the *Quaid-i-Azam*. Pakistan passed through a decade of coups and political revolutions—a decade which did nothing to enhance her prestige or stabilize her development.

Then at midnight on 7th-8th October 1958 the Revolution happened. General Mohammed Ayub Khan, Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, became Supreme Commander of all armed forces and Chief Martial Law Administrator. The Constitution was abrogated, the National Parliament and all provincial assemblies were dissolved. Political parties were abolished. The nation was offered a fresh start. Corruption, inefficiency, and greed were roundly challenged. Declarations of amnesty were announced, giving the opportunity for the unscrupulous to mend their ways and hoarders to reveal their stocks. The appeal was directed to the conscience of the nation, and hit the mark squarely.

A critical situation had called for swift action in the national interest, and the nation had no hesitation in accepting the overnight revolution.

The foreign exchange reserves, for example, which had stood at Rs. 960 million in 1956, had fallen to Rs. 410 million in 1958. The drain threatened to bankrupt the nation, yet the Martial Law Administration raised the reserves to Rs. 510 million within the first three months, and up to Rs. 1,100 million by August 1959. Similarly, the balance of payments, which showed a deficit of Rs. 165 million in the third quarter of 1958—just before the Revolution—showed a *surplus* of Rs. 57 million in the very next quarter. Hoarding had been going on among the higher levels of society. Two tons of gold were recovered from the sea-bed outside Karachi by the Pakistan Navy within two weeks of the new régime coming to power. In the capital alone raids made on hoarded stocks recovered nearly 14,000 watches, 61,000 bags of rice, 763,500 yards of foreign cloth, over 43,000 cigarettes, 138 cases of crockery, over 70,000 lb of cotton yarn, 4,500 reams of paper, 13,466 packages of textile machinery, and a lengthy list of other goods. Citizens who under cover of the amnesty came forward to reveal untaxed wealth together declared a total of Rs. 1,340 million, and no less than Rs. 83 million invested in foreign currency. The clean-up had started, and the Administration was immediately respected for the strong action it had taken.

General Ayub Khan was soon designated President of Pakistan, and later accorded the rank of Field-Marshal on the first anniversary of the Revolution 'as a token of the nation's gratitude to its saviour'. The nation which had come into being by a measure of revolt against both British and Hindu had had to have a second and internal revolution to become its true self—the Revolution of October 1958. Pakistan now celebrates a Revolution Day every October as a symbol of national reconstruction.

From the outset General Ayub Khan made it clear beyond all reasonable doubt that his intention was not to create or impose a military dictatorship. His pledge, in his first broadcast to the nation on assuming office as Chief Martial Law Administrator, was:

Let me announce in unequivocal terms that our ultimate aim is to restore democracy, but of the kind that people can understand and work.

To this end he, himself, has worked with uncommon success. Lost time has partly been retrieved by holding to a carefully planned time schedule. In the spring of 1958 I saw for myself the pathetic plight of nearly half a million refugees and homeless in and around Karachi. Not much more than a year later 40,000 homes

had already been built, the Korangi Colony, Karachi, to house nearly 200,000 of these homeless ones. In January 1959 6 million acres of the former Punjab were distributed to 1,420,000 landless Pakistanis, with permanent proprietary rights. Land reforms have gone on apace, partly to increase production and partly 'to remove social disequilibrium'. Before the Revolution vast sums of foreign exchange funds were being wastefully spent on importing quantities of food when fertile land in Pakistan was just not being used to grow the food it could.

Legal and educational reforms were recommended by specially appointed commissions. Courts in rural areas, *dehati adalats*, were proposed to decide on petty civil and criminal charges, and *mohalla* or ward courts in urban areas. Black-marketing was exposed. Commodity prices were soon stabilized. In foreign affairs, relations between India and Pakistan were improved by resolving border disputes in certain areas and questions of water supply off the Indus and its tributaries.

In short, the Revolution of October 1958 proved to be the rebirth of a nation born in 1947. The first decade, bright at first with hope and vigour, was later vitiated by the disruptive influence of self-interest, which seriously held back progress. The era of drift and frustration had to be broken sooner or later, and the issues resolved by strong-minded direction. In Pakistan birth and rebirth, 1947 and 1958, were two distinct stages of a prolonged revolution.

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An example, again, of the 'elusive and gradual' revolution is the Indonesian. This is not the place in which to recount the growth of nationalism between the two world wars, or to trace the part played by Dr. Sukarno, Dr. Sartono, Dr. Hatta, and others in fostering that spirit, both during Dutch colonial rule and Japanese military occupation. As the Japanese control crumbled and the prospect of Dutch administration revived, the Indonesians determined to stake their claim to independence in line with India, Burma, and Ceylon. A Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence was formed in early 1945, and Sukarno became its first Chairman.

On 17th August 1945 he and Dr. Hatta, on behalf of the Indonesian people, declared Indonesia to be an independent Republic, and Dr. Sukarno was unanimously elected President. A graduate in civil engineering by profession, a born orator, and hero of the nationalist movement, three times imprisoned for long periods by the Dutch, a Muslim who has five times undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca, Dr. Sukarno has been as indispensable to his country,

humanly speaking, as Nehru to India, U Nu to Burma, Ben Gurion to Israel, or Mao Tse-tung to China. It is extremely doubtful if any other Indonesian could have held together a nation so populous, extensive, and inexperienced through the first fifteen years of its life.

President Sukarno has repeatedly declared that the Revolution falls into three distinct phases between 1945 and 1960. The first was the assumption of authority grasped as the war ended in August 1945. This was the political and physical revolution against Dutch imperialism, which was hotly contested for the next four years, until the Dutch were forced by international intervention to yield. Sukarno himself was arrested by the Dutch towards the end of 1948, and sent first to Prapat in Sumatra and later to the island of Bangka. But in July 1949 he was released, and in December of the same year was elected President of the newly-formed Republic of the United States of Indonesia, which in 1950 was reconstituted the unitary Republic of Indonesia.

The years 1945 to 1950 were the period of overthrow, resisting and levering out the Dutch, demonstrating the determination to be free. The next five years, 1950 to 1955, were the period of survival, a particularly dangerous one, because half the nation felt the Revolution was completed, except for the resolving of internal tensions. Materially, the prospects for the new Indonesia seemed hopeful. Foreign aid was flowing in, the armed forces were being properly equipped, and Indonesia, one of the largest nations in Asia, was beginning to gain prestige in the outside world. But the situation was unreal, for Indonesia was still economically tied to the Netherlands, even though it was politically sovereign and independent. A Round Table Conference had worked out an uneasy compromise agreement.

The next move was strangely fortuitous—a sudden concentration of interest in Indonesia brought about by the holding of the first historic Afro-Asian Conference in Bandung. This landmark gave an instantaneous fillip to Indonesia's prestige, and really 'put it on the map'. The initiative of Dr. Sastroamidjojo brought it to pass, together with the support of the 'Colombo' Premiers—Pandit Nehru, Sir John Kotelawala, U Nu, and Mohammed Ali.

In 1956, eager to solve the question as to how best to develop Indonesia politically, Dr. Sukarno set off on the first of his world tours (1956 and 1959) to investigate methods of government and discuss with other leaders the art of political control. He visited the United States, Canada, West Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Mongolia, and

China. Clearly his experience not only led him to appreciate and admire much in each system—East and West, Communist and non-Communist—but also determined him to try to map out an alternative third course, for neither of the others seemed exactly suited to the needs of Indonesia. Nor did he relish the idea of deciding that Indonesia should become a neutralist Socialist Republic, for this would have smacked of modelling on India, and that would never have done. India had already long proved her stature, established herself as the world's leading neutral power, and at times found herself as an arbiter in periods of strife. Furthermore, neutrality sometimes conveyed the wrong impression, implying a middle course and peaceable intent, whereas one aspect of Indonesia's foreign policy was still the wresting of West Irian, if possible, from the Netherlands. India's example of peaceableness did not fit in with this, though the Kashmir problem remained a running sore.

Dr. Sukarno, therefore, struck out on a line of his own, describing his new policy as 'guided democracy', with the continuance of the party system as the expression of the will of the people, and Dr. Djuanda Kartawidjaja, who belongs to no political party, as Prime Minister. But even this experiment in liberal democracy did not prove successful. Private profiteering and tax-evasion continued. The increased antagonism to the Dutch, which had led Indonesia to cancel her debts to Holland at the time of the Suez Crisis in 1956, became so intense by December 1957 that anti-Dutch riots broke out in Indonesia, and a high proportion of the Dutch population was speedily evacuated. Sectional interests began to cut deep into national life. Rebel military leaders broke with the Government, and civil war in Sumatra and elsewhere bedevilled Indonesian unity.

On 5th July 1959, by Presidential decree, Dr. Sukarno dissolved the Constituent Assembly and reintroduced the Constitution of 1945, assumed the office of Prime Minister himself, and appointed a working Cabinet with a straightforward three-point programme: to satisfy the basic needs of the people in the shortest possible time; to promote security for the people and State; to continue the struggle against economic and political imperialism, which included the struggle for West Irian.

This reassertion of personal authority has been variously interpreted. Dr. Sukarno's opponents would like to have regarded it as veiled dictatorship, but the President claimed that the nation had rejected the autocracy of dictatorship, and the new policy for the nation was 'family democracy'. He appealed for mutual co-opera-

tion—*gotong royong*—and explained that all energies needed to be directed towards national reconstruction. Meanwhile, internal security was still threatened by forces both inside and outside the nation. The force of his appeal rested on nationalism—unity, progress, and prestige—more than on any party political or ideological concept.

But the business of unifying a nation means ensuring the support, or elimination, of potentially disloyal forces, and this raised a critical issue. How were the 2 or 3 million Chinese resident in Indonesia to be treated? As loyal and safely integrated, or as open to subversive influence? Various attempts had been made to settle the matter, but in 1959 the Central Government decreed that all Chinese occupied in retail trade in rural areas should be brought into the towns, where more careful oversight of their activities could be guaranteed. The Chinese Ambassador promptly protested, and a very difficult diplomatic exchange ensued. There are those who had thought that Dr. Sukarno at one stage had tended to lean heavily towards China as a model of good government and progress. But now that he was at loggerheads with China the real moment of testing had arrived.

The Indonesian Foreign Secretary, Dr. Subandrio, another Cabinet specialist who belongs to no political party, was despatched to Peking to reach an amicable and fair solution, but the treatment he received caused exasperation in Indonesia. Reports say that Subandrio met with disrespect, was kept waiting in Peking when matters of urgency were at stake, was then summoned peremptorily and spoken to as though inferior. It is said that he had to remind the Chinese authorities that he came to them as the Foreign Minister of a great nation deserving of respect. When he left, having concluded an agreement, he reported in Tokio and Manila, as well as in Djakarta, of the treatment he had experienced. South-East Asia was left to ponder whether this unfortunate reception had been calculated or misjudged, and if calculated, whether it arose of a desire to humiliate and intimidate, and whether this presaged a policy of expansion.

When the Chinese in rural areas in Indonesia did begin to move into the cities, the Government of China, true to the letter and spirit of its Constitution, offered to repatriate any who wished to return to China, and several thousands accepted the offer. Thus the 1960s opened with something of a rift and suspicion between these two great nations in Asia.

CHAPTER 8

Internationalism

Never was the concept of internationalism in Asia carried so high on a wave of optimism as at the close of the Bandung Conference in 1955. The hope of peaceable co-operation reached new heights which have not been touched since. Something was achieved, and something went wrong, but the reasons are becoming clear.

'Bandung internationalism' was an expression of jubilation among nations which had thrown off Western control. It was emotional and real, without being tied to political realities. It lacked the moral force of a collection of signatures to such a document as the United Nations Charter of Human Rights. The jubilation was summed up in a single highly successful conference, with no permanent constitutional embodiment. It has not yet been translated into regular practical politics.

The substance in the sentiment was real enough at the time, for otherwise nothing can explain the temporary trust that linked together countries as far apart as West Africa and the Pacific. Bandung in 1955 was as potentially creative a moment in history as was San Francisco ten years earlier, though on a smaller scale. It unquestionably gave birth to a burning desire in the twenty-nine Afro-Asian nations there assembled to work together in almost every sphere of human endeavour.

Had Bandung been followed up by a regular succession of useful conferences, some embodiment of Afro-Asian internationalism might have arisen and matured. The moment that was right was forfeited, strangely enough, by an outburst of acute nationalism in the Arab world which ran clean contrary to this spirit of internationalism. Even Nasser's offer of Cairo as the venue of the 'second Bandung' had to be rejected because the atmosphere in the Middle East had been poisoned. The so-called 'Solidarity Committee', which did eventually establish a headquarters in Cairo and claimed

to be a legitimate child of Bandung, was not an authentic offspring at all, but an opportunist brain-child of the Communist world.

Arab nationalism broke the spell of a possible new dynamic—internationalism in Asia and Africa. The chain reaction was quick to follow when other nations asserted themselves either in competition or retaliation, and thereby held up any progress towards internationalism.

The justification for an international outlook is plain enough, and Asians are as aware of the contraction of the world by quick communication and rapid exchange of news as anyone else. The politically-minded Asian is athirst to know how other countries deal with the various problems of reconstruction, with the result that at many official levels the degree of exchange visits and consultation is considerable. Delegations of one kind and another are crossing frontiers all the time in search of ideas and material co-operation. As an aspect of internationalism, the value of these exchanges cannot be underrated. The initiative is often taken by leaders of public life, whose imaginative insight keeps alive something of the idealism that must underlie genuine internationalism.

All who know Asia would probably agree that the model in this respect is India. Two reasons explain it. Firstly, India is essentially welcoming, an open and free society, sensitive, yet responsive to the need for progress. Little wonder that Delhi is the scene of conference after conference with an international flavour. Secondly, India stands outside the power blocks, resplendent in her own strength, with a moral stature and love of peace respected throughout the world. Without doubt India has an international influence more free of ulterior motive than most great nations. Therefore, nations feel safe in negotiating with India, especially small nations. Such is India's present reputation that she can afford to be expansive, in the generous-hearted sense, without being in any way embracing in the restricting sense.

If internationalism at best means the capacity to live together in trustful partnership in a world community, then India is one of the noblest examples of all. India's outlook is certainly one admired and appreciated by the free world, and is the fruit of the labours of many minds. In a world that has shrunk in recent decades, Gandhi's call to personal sacrifice and holiness, Rabindranath Tagore's contributions to peace, the Aga Khan's example in wise judgments, Pandit Nehru's astute statesmanship, Radhakrishnan's intellectual worth, and Vinoba Bhave's challenge to serve have all struck the imagination of the world and lifted India high above the

level of limiting nationalism. Truth and justice are more vital than self-interest.

Compare this attitude with two other great Asian nations, Indonesia and Communist China, and the point will be even clearer.

Indonesia, with its accumulating strength and fantastic potential, is nevertheless still held in check by caution and wariness internally, even when planning hard for the future and progressing all the time. She has not yet acquired that spirit of freedom from anxiety which is a precondition of a genuine outward-looking internationalism. It is true that her great leaders, Sukarno, Hatta, Sastroamidjojo, Djuanda, Leimena, Subandrio, and others, are all internationally-minded and experienced, and the same can be said of many enlightened officials and leaders of thought, but the problems of social and economic reconstruction press too hard on the country yet for confidence to be taken for granted. So the practical implications of internationalism in Indonesia have to be tempered by the dictates of nationalism.

On the other hand, people in both private and public life in Indonesia can never forget that Indonesia was the host nation that produced the new concept of internationalism at Bandung, and the ideal then set in motion has permeated the nation.

If Indonesia's neutrality had been earlier based on a clear-cut declaration, confirmed by results, the situation now might have been different, but Indonesia acquired her political independence more suddenly and in a less prepared state than, say, India, and will therefore take longer to develop her full maturity and undoubted coming greatness.

China is in a different case altogether. Her society is a closed one, fenced in by ideology and discipline, expansionist in theory, militant in practice. By the nature of her doctrine, internationalism must mean the winning of others to her way of thinking, the conversion of the rest of the world to Communism, the overthrow of capitalism and the revolutionary reorganization of society. Properly speaking, to the strict Marxist the very suggestion of peaceful co-existence is a contradiction in terms and is only defensible as the means to an end. Internationalism must mean ultimate world conquest. This in turn does not fit in with either Indonesia's foreign policy of 'free and active', or India's example of political neutrality within the context of international co-operation. Therefore there is an unresolved conflict in the interpretation of internationalism. Where can we find a solution?

There are four alternative concepts of internationalism, and South Asia, aware of the need to fit into a global unity, is affected by each

of them. These alternatives are: imperialism of the old school, Communist internationalism, United Nations authority, and something less articulate and more spiritual, the emergence of a new respect and fellowship, the awareness of an inter-family relationship, without the bugbear of overmuch politics or ulterior motive.

The first, imperialism, is easy to attack with accusations of exploitation and ruthlessness and to discredit as arrogant. But the old complaints about it are wearing thin in many quarters, and not all imperialisms are now seen to have been equally oppressive and blameworthy. Much of British imperialism, for example, was remarkably benevolent and philanthropic, as viewed fairly-mindedly in retrospect. The service and sacrifice of thousands was poured out for the good of India, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, Singapore, Borneo, Hong Kong, and elsewhere, often without thought of praise or any self-glorification. At its noblest, dedication subsisted within imperialism. British imperialism, in its ideal, had more of guardianship about it than tyranny, tutelage more than oppression, well-being and development rather than backwardness and downtroddenness. Proof of this lies in the greater political stability of some of these countries as compared with certain others, as well as in their gratitude for past service and continuing friendship. The old idea of imperialism was morally unjustifiable if it simply meant that the strong had any right to overwhelm and subdue the weak, and keep them weak. But in fact another principle was in operation: that a rich and advanced nation had a duty to help and encourage dependent dominions, and lead them along the path of progress and civilization.

Nevertheless, it remains true that some imperialisms were less enlightened, and were infinitely reluctant ever to surrender their hold, and these are the imperialisms that have riveted the stigma of oppression on what has frequently been a common feature of historic expansion.

This stigma has been turned to immense political advantage by clever Communist propaganda, which mischievously keeps alive the boggy of Western imperialism, as if it was a factor that could ever return in its old form. That day has long gone. Imperialism of the old school has utterly disappeared in the minds of most Western countries, and where it still lingers is in relative full retreat. But no one has yet succeeded in shattering the fraudulence and bluff of this propaganda.

All that needs to be said in this context is that the old conception of imperialism, though it had something of the quality of internationalism, was too concentric to be the solution now needed.

Furthermore, British imperialism, for its part, has given way to an entirely new conception, the idea of Commonwealth, and this is surely far more in tune with the times. Commonwealth is itself an international conception, and a good deal of South Asia is embraced by it. The right ideas of equality, mutual respect, and freedom are intrinsic and operative. The fact that it is so little boasted about or boosted is probably its strength as well as its weakness. One thing is certain: Commonwealth is not imperialism in a new guise; it is something different in nature and kind, a free association of adult nations.

The second alternative is international Communism, a vision and expectation taken seriously by all Marxists, but discounted all too facilely by millions in the 'free' world. The Communist believes in internationalism, but on his own ideological terms. He works for a known objective, and is undaunted by temporary setbacks. He is encouraged by any twist of Fortune that brings his vision nearer, and is confident that the capitalist world is crumbling into decadence. The non-Communist is thereby thrown on the defensive, alarmed by the threat, but too casual and complacent often to carry out a positive counter-programme. The weakness of the West is precisely this lack of vision or objective.

China's condemnation of Western imperialism demands added consideration in any essay on South Asia, for there is substance in her taunt and complaint. China cannot forget that for nearly a century she suffered a series of setbacks which heaped one indignity upon another. From the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 to Communist rule in 1949, China was successively at the mercy of foreign traders, foreign military forces, and innumerable other outside influences. Politically she was humiliated, economically exploited, and religiously invaded. All this was a measure of her own inadequacy to meet the challenges, and no nation wants to be reminded of that, least of all an ancient civilization with an inner pride and outward reserve. These memories of humiliation and indignity have given China a relentless determination to efface what has happened, 'to overtake Britain in twelve years', and to show the world a new and different China. Thus China has embarked not only on national recovery, but on a policy of fantastic expansion, geared into the vision of a sweeping Communist world victory, which is what a Communist means by internationalism.

Mr. Kenneth Younger, formerly British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs (1950-1), once wrote the words: 'No Western plans should be based upon an assumption that the Chinese bid for

leadership is likely to fail' (*Fabian International Essays*, p. 137). That is true in many contexts.

But in trying to generate a belief in internationalism under the beguiling banner of peace, Communists have in fact been their own worst enemies, and are quite liable to overreach themselves. This irony is most powerfully seen in a remark by Vinoba Bhave: 'If the Communists [in India] give up their faith in force of arms, they would find even me joining hands with them. I would then declare that I, too, am a Communist. But their technique till now has been to create dissensions in every village and set them fighting against each other. Mine is to unite and build them into an integrated community of love.'

The third alternative is the United Nations Organization, the acknowledged international forum. It is not a static instrument of government. The very balance of power within it is changing all the time. In the first fifteen years of its life the United Nations has represented, first, the moral leadership of the Allied nations (Russia included with the West, plus Nationalist China), then for a short spell the major nations, until the Korean War and the Bandung Conference ushered in the Afro-Asian grouping as a block power, and then latterly the influx of a number of new independent nations has thrown the voting balance out again, and landed the United Nations Organization in a situation which will take time to resolve. Khrushchev saw the opportunity of exploiting this new dilemma in the autumn of 1960, and tried to challenge its stability at the meetings of the General Assembly. His blustering technique of hammer and tongs, ridicule and rebuff, failed to capsize the Organization, but made it sway. His attack on the Secretary-General, his proposal of a three-man headship (potentially the principle of 'divide and rule'), and his threat to withhold funds for the financial support of U.N.O. activities and operations, were all calculated mischief. It is clearly not in the interests of international Communism to allow the United Nations to become an effective centre of world moral opinion or handmaid of government, but rather to use U.N.O. as a means to an end. The showdown has yet to come, but come it will. The smaller Communist countries inevitably play the tune called, for the present, by Russia, and some of the smaller neutralist countries dread any extension of Communism. All the more reason for U.N.O. to stand out, as bound by the terms of her Charter, as the guardian of political sovereignty, and woe betide U.N.O. or its equivalent if it is constitutionally weakened or undermined.

So fashionable is it to criticize U.N.O., and suggest its powerless-

ness to deal effectively with world problems, that one tends to forget the remarkable amount of excellent work quietly carried out in a routine and devoted way by its thoroughly international Secretariat, the committees and specialized agencies all over the world and throughout the year. Let it never be forgotten that U.N.O. did succeed in containing the Korean War and prevented its extension. U.N.O. intervened successfully in the Suez Canal campaign of 1956, and was prompt to take action and try to restore order in the Congo in 1960. As a result of these crises, the necessity for an international 'police force' under U.N.O. control, long advocated, was at last definitely recognized, and became an unquestioned contribution to world peace. U.N.O. forces are in an invidious position, being placed so often in a third-party relationship to a problem. They easily become the object of attack from both the other sides, accused of partisanship or of overstepping their legality. In Korea U.N.O. authority was perforce on the side of the non-Communist world in resistance to "aggression". In the Suez Crisis U.N.O. came in as mediator, separating the factions and restoring order. In the Congo U.N.O. forces were sent in to prevent the spread of civil war and lawlessness in the difficult interim period between the chaotic end of Belgian control and the establishment of a satisfactory African authority.

Though this international force is still in its infancy, it is crucial that it be given every encouragement and support until it grows into an effective organ of U.N.O. But for the six contingents in the Levant, it is doubtful if peace would long survive between Israel and her five Arab neighbours. In renewed visits to the Middle East in 1960 and 1961 I saw for myself both the valuable role played by these U.N.O. contingents and their relative unpopularity. It is part of the price we have to pay for the development of the sense of internationalism.

Any crisis in Asia is a matter of international concern. The fear that Communism might overrun South Asia is a real bogey haunting the Western and 'free' world, and the suddenness with which the Cold War became a hot war in Korea in June 1950 is not forgotten. Any conflict must be contained, and here Laos is an excellent example. Though a relatively small sovereign state, with a population estimated at not much more than 2 millions, it borders on China to the north, Burma to the north-west, Thailand to the west, Cambodia to the south, and North and South Vietnam to the east. It is wedged between all the contending parties—Communist, non-Communist, and neutral. France first recognized Laos as an independent state in July 1949, and confirmed this independence in a

treaty of friendship in October 1953. Laos, in return, agreed to stay within the French Union. But Communist forces, determined to disrupt this connection, invaded Laos from North Vietnam in December 1952, and held control of half the country within a year. Not until 1954 was fighting brought to a stop in what was still called Indo-China. A conference in Geneva reached agreement on the following main points:

(a) The forces of the Laotian National Movement, led by Prince Souphanouvong, and generally known as Pathet Lao, undertook to move into the provinces of Phong Saly and Sam Neua in the north-east of Laos, pending a political settlement. This body has been regarded all along as the spearhead of the Communist threat to Laos.

(b) Vietminh forces (Communist help from Vietnam) promised to withdraw within 120 days.

(c) French Union forces also undertook to withdraw within 120 days, except for 3,500 personnel, who were to maintain two French military bases, and 1,500 officers and N.C.O.s, who were responsible for training Laotian troops.

(d) An International Commission, with Russia and Britain as co-Chairmen, and Poland, Canada, and India as members, was to control and supervise the carrying out of the Geneva Agreement.

What China thought of Russia's part as an 'honest broker' on her southern doorstep it is interesting to imagine. But the commission fulfilled its obligations, and a thoroughly international body proved its worth again.

In November 1957 a rapprochement seemed to have been reached. The Laotian Prime Minister, Prince Souvanna Phouma, agreed that Pathet Lao was to be recognized as a political party, that two Pathet Lao members, including Prince Souphanouvong himself, were to join the Government, that other members of Pathet Lao were to be incorporated into the Laos administration, and that 1,500 Pathet Lao troops were to be assimilated into the Laotian Army and the remainder into the Army Reserve. All this was to the unqualified advantage of Pathet Lao, a token of surprising trust. In return, Pathet Lao promised to recognize the restoration of the Central Government's authority in the two north-eastern provinces.

To many an outsider the rapprochement had the semblance of a rather suspicious incursion. At supplementary elections which took place shortly afterwards thirteen of the twenty-one seats contested were won by Pathet Lao or neutralist candidates.

The International Commission was invited to withdraw from Laos and leave internal matters to Government solution. Both India and Poland wanted to stay until greater settlement was reached, but Canada agreed to withdraw, and the Commission eventually left in July 1958.

When Pathet Lao refused to disarm, its leader, Prince Souphanouvong, was arrested. In 1959 it was reported that armed forces from North Vietnam were in Laotian territory in the north-east, and the United States began to step up her military aid.

In the elections of April 1960 fifty-one of the fifty-nine seats were won by right-wing candidates, and the balance was suddenly upset again. At the beginning of the year a change of government put the right-wing General Nosavan to the fore, only to lead to another coup in August, led by the 'neutralist' Captain Kong Lae. Prince Souvanna Phouma was recalled to hold a moderate Government in power, but failed to succeed. One thing he did was to establish diplomatic relations with Russia, and this gave Russia a glorious excuse to have something to say about every succeeding crisis, month by month. Before the end of 1960 yet another Government was in power, this time with Prince Boun Oum as Prime Minister and General Nosavan in command of the Army.

Nevertheless, all manner of opportunism and complications combined to set up a situation which proved irresistible to mischievous forces in Laos. World attention was focused on strife in the Congo and Algiers. The United States was changing Presidents, Europe was ridden with unrest, and Cuba was rapidly becoming a Russian satellite in the New World. Most nations were far too busy to notice what might happen in a country in the middle of South-East Asia.

In December 1960 Russian and Chinese leaders spent several weeks in Moscow behind closed doors discussing the fate of other nations and the successful execution of the Marxist revolution. Behind the smoke-screen of 'peaceful coexistence', they plotted the undermining of capitalist society, but never quite resolved the tensions between themselves.

Almost before the leaders separated the civil war in Laos came to a head again, with accusations of Communist forces from Vietnam coming to the help of Pathet Lao and Russian supplies being flown in by Russian aircraft. For Russia it was just the opportunity to make use of her new stake in Laos and steal a march on China in South-East Asia. With a clever appearance of relative unconcern, China, in the persons of her Prime Minister Chou En-lai and nine

sizable Chinese delegations, was on the borders of Laos, attending the annual celebrations of Burma's independence.

The Western powers were undecided what to do. Was the situation another Korea? Was this the moment to use the South-East Asia Treaty Organization and risk troop concentrations on the Laos border? Or would it be wiser to re-convene the International Commission? Before they had decided anything, Russia called for the International Commission to meet again, herself being joint Chairman, thus putting herself in the happy position of being an arbiter in a dilemma in which she was directly involved. The United States, which had given over £100 million in material aid to support the independence of Laos, dreaded its collapse or engulfment in the Communist camp. The end is not yet at the time of writing. To which Laotian Government would the Commission be accredited—the pro-Communist Pathet Lao group or the pro-Western Boun Oum Government?

One thing is clear: either an international force under U.N.O. must become effective soon, and be capable of exerting the moral authority of this world organization, or it may soon be too late. In the interests of real internationalism, governments must be prepared to contribute to a large peace force to hold the world intact and free from war. The paradox must be recognized that it takes one force to counter another force in this context of peace and war.

The fourth alternative is difficult to define, though not beyond the imagination to see. A new and deep sense of internationalism can arise out of cultural and religious intercommunication. To a certain extent this is happening. Educationally, for example, it is nothing unusual to find among a group of students in India, Ceylon, Malaya, Indonesia, and other South Asian nations those who have studied in Japan, U.S.A., Russia, and Europe. I have met an Egyptian lecturing at the University in Singapore, a Swiss and German in Djakarta, and so on, until one is overwhelmed by the cosmopolitan nature of the new and rising Asia. This exchange of persons and ideas, so generally accepted, is proof of a growing internationalism. Of course, inducements abound and special privileges tend to endear one to the favouring nation, but that is nothing new.

As for language, it is possible to claim that English is about as strong a bond of communication as any other single factor in South Asia. Had the British left no other legacy whatever behind them, this alone would have been noteworthy in a world short enough of unifying influences. It is far easier to travel in Asia with a command of the English language even than in Europe. Naturally, resistance

to the perpetuation of English as a language will increase, in spite of its undeniable value. But India took years to decide which languages to regard as official, and has had to postpone more than once the date beyond which English will be superseded. China intends to adapt her language to Western (Arabic) script, in the hope that it may be simpler to learn and more readily understood, but this transmutation is taking much longer than was anticipated, and will take even longer to become truly international.

An amusing sidelight on this occurred at the Bandung Conference in 1955. Like so many statesmen, Chou En-lai uses an interpreter, partly to give himself an extra moment to think out his reply while his interpreter repeats the question. I have it on good authority that in the framing of the official communiqué at the end of the Conference the members of the sub-committee were sometimes at a loss for the word which would convey exactly what was needed. They were amazed at the number of times Chou En-lai would quietly hit on the very word needed. However much he pretended to have little command of English, he had a happy knack of proving himself a master of the language, a perfect blend of Chinese intellectuality and traditional modesty.

Personal contacts outside the direct field of politics are unconsciously building a sense of internationalism, but it is difficult to draw a line between what is inside and outside of politics. India set up in 1950 a Council for Cultural Relations to try to establish and strengthen relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture. Other countries have done the same. An attempt is being made to establish an Asian Parliamentary Union. Countless international bodies are adding their bit to the richness and fullness of a new international understanding, some with a measure of government backing and encouragement and some without. Of all the influences, religion is probably the most profound and enduring, and Asia—especially South Asia—understands more about the nature of spiritual life than most of the world. Because religion is of the heart and mind, reflects the true nature of man, and enfolds him in a great destiny, it has its place in any internationalism, and must be the subject of the next chapters of this book.

PART III RELIGIOUS

CHAPTER 9

Islam

Islam is a conception embodying a religion, a culture, and an element of political drive, and the three cannot be separated. It has become a living force again in the twentieth century, not primarily because of any spontaneous internal rebirth, but in response to a whole series of events which have happened in the Muslim world at large. Devout Muslims in the Middle East had been startled by the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, and were directly challenged by the secular reforms and successes of Kemal Ataturk, and had been antagonized by the idea of Zionism and the emergence of the state of Israel. They took new heart during the Second World War, when the great European nations exhausted themselves in what was virtually a gigantic civil war, and thus lowered their stock in the eyes of the rest of the world. This was the opportunity for Muslim leaders to show some initiative, and the chance was not neglected. The Arab League was formed to fill the political vacuum created by the retreat or retraction of the West, and consequentially to combat the influx of the Jews into the Middle East. A pan-Islamic vision quickened apace, and Muslims in regions as far apart as Morocco and the Philippines developed a closer fellow-feeling. New nations were born one after the other, either constitutionally committed to

the pattern of Islam or dedicated sympathetically to an ideal which could be regarded by followers of the Prophet as an approximation to an Islamic pattern of society.

The creation of the state of Pakistan, an Islamic republic, ideally the 'land of the pure', a nation set apart for the preservation of all that is sacred and precious to the Muslim, was proof of the strength of Islam to stand up to Hinduism, to impose its will on the British arbiter, and carve out new frontiers to cradle a nation. Egypt was similarly dedicated to the principle of Islam. Indonesia was not so closely or exclusively identified with Islam as Pakistan and Egypt, but the predominant claims of a population with a Muslim majority found their sanction in official promises. For Indonesia is founded—ideally—on the Five Principles, the *Pantjasila*, the first of which is an affirmation of belief in One Supreme God, and it is in this declaration that Muslims, and Christians too, take confidence and hope.

Malaya is another stronghold of Islam in South Asia, and one must never forget that India still contains the third largest population of Muslims in Asia, a total of approximately 45 million Muslims in a population of roughly 360 million. Furthermore, although India is a secular state, the Constitution so guarantees religious toleration and prohibits discrimination that it is estimated that nearly 1 million Muslims have settled back in India since the violent days of communal friction which accompanied partition in 1947. Muslims are playing a conspicuous part in public and national life in India in proportion to their numbers. So much for a glimpse of the range and resilience of Islam.

Now, what of Islam as a religion? Its authority rests intellectually on the teachings of the Qur'ān, and the traditions that accumulated in the first few centuries after the *Hijra*, the flight of Mohammed and his followers from Mecca to Medina in A.D. 622. Doctrinally, the emphasis is on the One Supernatural Godhead, and the opening words of the Qur'ān, the *Fatiha*, are such as can have an appeal to Jews, Christians and most spiritually-minded people alike:

In the name of God,
Most gracious, most merciful.
Praise be to God, the Lord of Creation,
Most gracious, most merciful,
Master of the Day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship,
Thine aid do we seek,
Show us the right way,

The way of those upon whom Thou hast
bestowed grace,
Whose end is not wrath, who go not astray.

The divine teachings of the Qur'ān are said to have been given direct to Mohammed, the prophet and mouthpiece of God, and any suggestion that they can ever be altered or modified is anathema to all orthodox believers. The authority of verbal inspiration protects the Qur'ān from what may be called 'scientific' investigation as to source, content and value. In this respect it has escaped the incredibly thorough scrutiny to which the Bible was subjected in recent generations by the exponents of textual and literary criticism, the new findings of archaeologists, the study of ancient languages and texts, and the novel interpretations of various theological schools. The Bible, for its part, has emerged from these investigations and critical examinations stronger than ever in its confirmed authenticity and consequent authority. The Qur'ān has not yet had its severe critical test in the modern age, and it may possibly be part and parcel of the coming cultural renaissance in Asia that a re-examination of the Muslim scriptures and traditions (*Sunnah*) be undertaken in the light of modern processes and criteria.

Nearly every religion crystallizes, in the last analysis, around some basic infallibility. For Protestant Christians it is the authority of the Bible as the Word of God, revealed to mankind by the Holy Spirit through the holy men of old. For Catholic Christians it is the authority of the Church of God, together with its ministry, sacraments, creeds, and discipline. For Roman Catholics the necessary pivot is the Papacy and Vatican, the apex of a vast but closely-knit organization. For the Muslim it is the Qur'ān, together with all that goes with it—the Islamic Law, fasting, the practice of prayer, devotion to the Prophet, and the pilgrimage, if possible. These obligations are still forceful influences in Muslim lands, and adequate account of them must be taken in assessing the contemporary scene in the East.

Geographically, it looks as though the Middle East will continue to be the centre of gravity of Islam in the foreseeable future. The historical associations with the Prophet alone make it more than likely. It was the original area of expansion and the setting of the early Caliphates. Mecca and Medina, Jerusalem, Damascus, Baghdad, and later Cairo and Constantinople, have been successively the focal points of loyalty or centres of pressure. They have not been seriously rivalled by any other place. At the present time fully half the Muslim world lives east and south of the Khyber

Pass—in Pakistan, India, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Far East. Yet Lahore, Kuala Lumpur, or Djakarta are never likely to steal the thunder from the ancient centres of the Middle East. True, Pakistan has on several occasions made a bid for political leadership of the Muslim world, but ambitions have so far outstripped capacity, leadership has lacked continuity, and the nation is naturally more concerned to establish stability than meddle in power politics. Nevertheless, among influential sections of the community there has always been a desire to ensure that Pakistan plays a vital part in the resuscitation of Islam as a dynamic force in the contemporary world. The International Islamic Colloquium, a reassessment of cultural contribution, held in Lahore in January 1958, was one example of this ambition and initiative. But the vast desert regions around the Persian Gulf somewhat detach the Muslim world to the east from the Muslim centre of gravity in the Middle East. No university, for instance, can be seen to compete with the Azhar University in Cairo as a repository and determinant of orthodoxy. Other universities may carry out more research, invite wider interest or seem more in tune with the times, but the hard core of conservatism and traditionalism will continue to reside in the Middle East. Nearly a third of the Muslim world lives in the northern half of Africa, and they in turn tend to look to Egypt, Arabia, and the Levant as the sacred source and political anvil of their religion and culture. So from the Atlantic seaboard of West Africa to the equatorial Pacific the overriding factor of common influence for millions and millions of people is their attachment to the Muslim faith and the culture that has arisen out of it. No one can possibly foretell what the impact of this Islamic tradition on future development is likely to be. It is sure to insist that religion be not scorned, forsaken, or eclipsed in an age of fantastic material advance. Allied with the force of nationalism, it may begin to attack illiteracy and share in the prevailing re-emphasis on the value of education. It may canalize learning in some distinctive direction. It may help to revivify the arts, especially architecture, as expressions of beauty and the handmaids of worship, to the discomfort and confusion of alien atheistic philosophies. The conflict of these two may issue in something new, as so often in the process of history.

We now turn to a consideration of the nature of religion within Islam. It is fundamentally community, brotherhood, in the sense that Church and State cannot strictly be considered apart, for they are theoretically one and indivisible. As God is one, so must His creation, His work, be one. There is, ideally, no distinction as in the West between Church and State. Carried to its logical conclusion,

this implies that there is no need even for a priesthood, for all believers worship in their own right and theologically mediation is unnecessary. This was clearly stated in April 1952 by Mohammed Natsir, one-time Prime Minister of Indonesia, when addressing a meeting in Karachi of the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs. He said:

The truth is that Islam has no priests. . . . Still more important is the fact, which is self-evident in the absence of priesthood, that there exists in Islam no 'Church' in the sense of a corporate body having a separate existence within the State. Therefore, Islam cannot conceive of a separation of religion and community, or society, or nation, or state.

This is in principle a way of saying that in Islam no department of life is outside the scope of religion, that the Islamic law, the *Shari'a*, is to be respected and adhered to, and that the claims of Islam are applicable to those who accept allegiance. It is a formidable boast, scarcely less 'totalitarian' in the modern age than it was aggressive in the early days of its fanatical vigour.

Like all world religions, Mohammedism has its varying complexions, its cross-currents and diverse opinions, its power of resistance and facility for adaptation. It has as many rifts, sectional interests, and competing interpretations as other religions. Nor are these differences and stresses purely regional. There are as rigidly conservative elements in Sumatra and East Pakistan as there are in the Yemen or Saudi Arabia, just as there are liberal elements in Egypt and the Lebanon akin to those in India and China. It is therefore difficult and dangerous to generalize.

Islam makes five practical demands on its adherents. First is the creed, the acceptance of the doctrinal fundamentals. Second is the practice of prayer, strictly five times a day—early morning, mid-day, mid-afternoon, sunset, and late evening. Muslims are 'called' to prayer in towns and villages by the *muezzin* from a minaret, and millions respond to the call, following a set routine: facing Mecca with head covered and touching the ground with the forehead in obeisance. Devout individuals will need no reminder or summons from the minaret, but will say their prayers at the appropriate times as opportunity avails. Well do I remember the first time I felt impelled to join in fellowship with a Muslim at prayer. I was motoring by myself from the escarpment at Cyrene in Libya to the coastal town of Appollonia when I saw a shepherd begin to say his prayers beside his flocks. I drove my 15-cwt. truck to the roadside,

knelt at the edge of sparse pasturage, and likewise opened my heart to the Almighty in praise and thanksgiving. When I clambered back into my truck the Senussi shepherd waved affectionately towards me and I returned the wave. We were brothers in prayer, knit at least by common example and witness

Congregational prayer is usual in the mosques on Fridays and in the evenings during Ramadan.

The third important practice is fasting, which is supposed to be obligatory throughout the month of Ramadan, when there is abstinence from food and drink, smoking, and all indulgence from first dawn to sunset, a taxing discipline for all concerned, and to which millions of Muslims strictly adhere. In centres of large population a siren or hooter is sounded to notify the end of the day's fast. In Karachi, near the Law Courts and Parliament, it sounded like a wartime alert signal, loud and penetrating.

The fourth practice is alms-giving, common to all religions both as an expression of gratitude to God for abundant blessing and also a token of support for the Faith and care for the needy.

Fifth is the pilgrimage, *Hijra*, which is the ambition of many a sincere Muslim to undertake if he can—the trip to Mecca, the place where Muslims claim that Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son (not Isaac, as according to the Bible, but Ismael, according to the Qur'ān), and the place where Mohammed lived, and whence Islam may be said to have sprung. In many respects Mecca is the hub of Islam, the place where race, language, and nationality are transcended by a deep awareness of brotherhood.

Another obligation is the duty to make disciples and not to lose them, the necessity if need arises to declare war on the unbeliever, and insist at the point of the sword on the inviolate nature of Islam. In this spirit Muslim armies in the first century after the death of the Prophet conquered and converted all of what is generally now known as the Middle East, the whole length of the North African coastline, and penetrated across Spain into the centre of France before they met their first real defeat at the hands of Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours in A.D. 732, exactly 100 years after Mohammed's death. The *Jihad*, or Holy War, became part and parcel of Muslim expansion, a weapon accepted and glorified. The call to arms finds a ready response in generation after generation, especially if the conflict can be represented as defence or attack on the infidel or unbeliever. In the course of a Holy War polytheists were allowed the choice of embracing Islam or being put to death by the sword. Normally, however, this did not apply to Hindus and Zoroastrians. Mercifully for Jews and Christians, the Islamic

Law explicitly says that 'the people of the book' should be given the third alternative of subject status (second-class citizenship, as we would say today) in the Muslim state. The *Jihad* has accumulated a tradition of co-operation between Muslim neighbours, though not strong enough a binding force to prevent endless internal enmities or lead to unity. The legacy of this obligation to defend the Faith still has its expression at the individual and personal level. Political treachery is still rewarded with assassination in places, and apostasy with murder. Converts from Mohammedism to, say, Christianity, if avowed and open, still run the danger of sudden death, vindictively inflicted, especially in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. Islam fences in its membership with promises of reward and threats of punishment in very much the characteristic way that the Catholic Church does in Christendom. Each claims a dogmatic authority in matters of revelation and obedience, and uses the weapon of fear to buttress discipline. Only in India, South-East Asia, and parts of Africa, where the balance of religions is more fluid, is there a more lenient attitude and a slightly easier interchange. In a few districts in Indonesia, for example, Muslims and Christians—both monotheistic in doctrine and coming from a common inheritance—have shown that it is possible to work together in the national interest in harmony. Theoretically, this spirit should spread if the principles of the United Nations Charter on Human Rights become more universally operative, with their insistence on freedom to profess, practise, and propagate one's own religion. But it is at this point that Muslim states resist the Charter by denying that a Muslim has the right to change his religion.

If a new pattern of culture is likely to emerge gradually in Muslim lands, what contribution can Islam make to it? One thing must be certain: such culture as there is at the moment is being attacked from every side by all the modern forces of so-called 'progress'—the clamour of education, technical development, industrialization, mass influence—especially by the Press, speech, and radio—international commitments, and a profusion of new ideas and fashions which will take decades to absorb and more decades to adjust to a distinctively Asian mould.

The pessimist and cynic will maintain that the onward march of atheism that comes in the wake of Marxism is too strong a wave of scorn and negative argument for even the defenders of Islam to resist. Marxism puts a bold face on atheism and calls it 'scientific' truth, but this only makes Islam all the more wary. This battle is already joined. Marxism is doing its utmost to break up one of the great barriers to its advance—the barrier of solid Islamic influence

that stretches from Casablanca to the Celebes, from North Africa to South-East Asia. Islam is increasingly suspicious of the probes and penetrations that Marxist interests try to make all along that line.

One of the cleverest stratagems made to counter this suspicion happened at the Bandung Conference in April 1955, that peak moment in history when twenty-nine newly-liberated nations foregathered to celebrate their freedom, compare their experience, and enunciate their hopes. It was the first time that Communist China, that vast nation of impending power and probable greatness, came right out into the glare of international affairs and represented the Communist position in theory and practice without the presence of her ally, Russia. By one brilliant stroke of imagination, the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, brought with him in his delegation, as an accredited representative of China, a Chinese *imam*, a Muslim religious leader. The appeal of this went straight to the heart of Indonesians, and was tremendously appreciated by the Muslim delegations at the Conference. It implied everything that was necessary—freedom of religion, sympathy with the aspirations of Islam, and, in general, an atmosphere of toleration calculated to ease suspicion. The gesture did not miss its mark.

This must mean that by and large the old methods of direct persecution, along the lines pursued in Russia between the two world wars, are less likely to be repeated with quite the same wholesale ruthlessness and in quite the same way. But one cannot be sure. Marxism has certainly learnt that a show of toleration and compromise, even the pretence of friendship, is essential in the early stages of infiltration and engulfment, so as not to stir up emotional resistances. Ridicule, anti-religious propaganda, and expropriation are the aspects of persecution which can be applied later, in the attempt to suffocate and eliminate religion—as in China today.

So it comes about that true Islam inevitably views any atheistic philosophy with repugnance, and is continually being put on its guard by the unfolding present. A new alertness and readiness to defend the Faith is the result. The weekly address in hundreds of thousands of mosques on Fridays has become a powerful rallying point. In colleges and universities students are showing a greater interest in their inheritance. As cities expand and new areas of population grow up, mosques are being built to cater for the spiritual edification of believers. The observance of Ramadan, as well as numerous fasts, and festivals, all combine to give some Islamic stamp to their thinking and way of life, their habits and routine, and in turn confirm the traditions of the Muslim world, in spite of the increase of secularism.

Culture is partly gauged by the institutions it creates, the literature it produces, the men of learning it turns up, and the artistic interests it encourages. Most of these indications are still in the embryonic phase of development. But to give some examples of the vitality in the field of learning let us take India, the predominantly Hindu country, where one would not perhaps expect to find much in the way of Muslim cultural enterprise.

First there is the famous Muslim University at Aligarh, one of the great centres of Islamic culture. Then there is the Jamia Millia in the suburbs of Delhi, a notable educational institution, including adult education and teacher training. Other centres include Mazahir Uloom at Saharanpur and the Dar-ul-Uloom at Deoband, an international Islamic institution with students from all the neighbouring Muslim areas—Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia, and the Middle East. Muslims are not content with their ancient institutions, but are building new ones as well. One of the most recent is a Muslim University in Solo, Central Java, which is deliberately designed to be an Eastern University, with education in accordance with Islamic tradition, as distinct from so many modern universities in the East which have modelled themselves consciously or unconsciously on European or American patterns.

In contrast to orthodoxy, which must be the inner strength of Islam, there are the considerable trends in liberalism, which have a wide appeal, particularly in the Middle East. The liberal Muslim organization in India, the *Jama'iat-al-Ulama-i-Hind*, which supported the Congress Party at the time of partition and opposed the Muslim League in its demand for two separate nations, has been concerned to retain Islam, but in such a way as not to run directly counter to Hinduism or invite trouble. To this end, much compromise has been suggested. Muslims are asked to learn and use Hindi, not to offend Hindus by eating cattle, and generally to yield to local custom where no drastic infringement of Muslim culture is at stake. But the well-intentioned aims of liberalism have so blunted the force of Islam as to infuriate the orthodox on the one hand and encourage luke-warmness on the other. So far from producing a distinctive positive blend or contribution in the cultural transition, this trend will probably turn out to be yet another example of India's way of swallowing up ideologies and pooling them in one extraordinary syncretism. But in other parts of the world Islam is bound to find some more effective way of stamping traditional characteristics on the face of things new, whether in outlook, appearance, art, or learning.

What now of Islam as a political force? Is it a factor that depends

on personalities or nations, a genuine matter of living interest to multitudes or the stagnant residuum of a dying faith kept alive by the combustible force of nationalism? What proof can be shown of its vitality?

Although Islam ought probably to be most flourishing in the area of the Middle East, its historic hub, pathetic rival tensions rule this out, and one has to turn farther east for good examples of revival and strength, especially to Pakistan and Indonesia.

It is practically no exaggeration to say that the two parts of Pakistan are held together by loyalty to the principle of Islam alone. The two parts, separated by the whole width of India, are so different in language, culture, economy, and political background that one wonders what can be the powerful binding force, and the answer is unquestionably Islam.

In Indonesia two Muslim Congresses liberated some of the political force that is deep-set in Islam. The first, held in October 1952 in northern Sumatra, gave a salutary reminder to the national leaders that the Muslim religion was to be kept prominently in mind, and led to the formation of a new movement, Mubaligh Islam, or Missionary Islam. The second Congress, held in Medan in April 1953, drew up the following principles and aims:

1. The expansion of Islam should take place through peaceful conversion, and not by compulsion.
2. Religious leaders ought to demonstrate the teachings of Islam by example, and not by precept alone.
3. The constitution of Islam should be Islamic, based upon the Qur'ān and the traditions.
4. The State should be a republic with a Muslim as its head.
5. The State should recognize and safeguard the fundamental rights of all citizens, including the religious minorities.
6. The economic policy of the State should aim at promoting the prosperity of the people.

The spirit of this declaration is still very much alive.

Islam came to Indonesia, rather late, as an established pattern of society with a given structure, and imposed itself on top of other layers and types of society, animistic, Hindu, and Buddhist. In various ways these earlier civilizations show through and can be traced. This can either mean that the roots of Islam have not yet penetrated to real depths, or, contrariwise, that the indigenous population have a happy knack of accepting whatever comes and of assimilating it without too earnestly following the attendant

obligations. Thus it has been said that Muslims in Indonesia 'combine a strong loyalty to Islam with laxity in the observance of religious duties'. If this is true, is Indonesia equally open to any other ideology that invades the Republic, and will it as readily let it come?

The official foreign policy was once described to me by one of Indonesia's Deputy Prime Ministers as 'free and active', by which he claimed that Indonesia was anxious not to take sides in the power division of the world, but that Indonesia had every right to assess all the various alternative methods of government and choose for herself, after utmost consideration, what parts of each system might suit the special needs of the country. It is therefore still an open question as to how far Islam will leave its present stamp on this nation, and how it will compare with Pakistan, Malaya, and Egypt in time to come as a leading Muslim nation.

CHAPTER 10

Hinduism

Hinduism is a complex amalgam of philosophy and religion down the ages, of great antiquity and resilience, yet belonging almost exclusively to the vast Indian sub-continent of Asia. Its fantastic diversification of ideas, absorption of new thought and flexible interpretation make it practically impossible to define, a fact which is readily admitted by most honest Hindus. It is no less complicated than Nature, and human nature, which it sets out to explain.

If Hinduism had begun as an historical religion, and if it were possible to study the sacred teachings and life of a single Founder or Master-mind, as Buddha, the Christ, or Mohammed, the credentials of Hinduism would be simpler to analyse and the process of doctrinal formulation more easy to follow. But such is not the case.

It is impossible to trace back with any degree of historical accuracy to the periods of creative impulse which eventually produced Hindu philosophy, and say anything much about the minds which originally influenced Hinduism. The people concerned, respected and revered as well they must have been, were not as important as the truths they set in train. These unsung holy men and pioneers of religion, *rishis* as they were called, lived for the most part in the regions of the Indus and Ganges, and built up such a religious tradition that India has rightly come to be regarded as one of the great centres of spirituality in the world ever since. Their thoughts are distilled in the teachings of the *Vedas* and the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, further supported by the simpler interpretations embodied in the lesser scriptures, the various *Smritis* and *Puranas*. These make up the sacred literature on which the religion is based. From these origins social institutions and religious practices have derived and developed, with a hardening of thought, on the one hand, which has so far defied all challenge and an astonishing lack of rigidity, on the other hand, which

suggests that Hinduism is always ready to adjust itself to environmental changes so long as a religious outlook on life is retained.

Out of Hinduism came Buddhism, somewhat as Christianity grew out of Judaism, and, since Buddhism has spread to Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Tibet, Japan, China, and elsewhere in the East, so millions of Asians subconsciously turn to India as the source of their faith, and a witness to the paramount importance of religion. 'Mother India' has, therefore, more spiritual children in a sense than perhaps any other country in the world, with the possible exception of Palestine (Israel/Jordan).

The oldest Vedic hymns, which give us the early fundamentals of Hinduism, express the truth that man is bound by nature, a close relationship focused in a myriad ways.

Each natural force is named and separate—Surya (the sun), Agni (fire), Indra (watery atmosphere), Ushas (dawn), and innumerable others, all of which assume the proportions of deity in the popular mind, even though in strict Vedic theology they are but manifestations of the power of Brahma, the Creator-Spirit. The impression quickly arises that Hinduism is essentially polytheistic, and in the minds of many Hindus this is so. Yet in its noblest forms Hinduism is often monotheistic, claiming that Brahma is the manifestation of God in creation, Vishnu the power of God in preservation, and Siva the activity of God in destruction, but the three proceed from the same force and without each other are illusory and incomplete. Hindu philosophy insists that there is no conflict between God, soul, and universe, for all men are bound together, and no duality properly exists. Hinduism may be said, therefore, to be based on four cardinal principles; the non-duality of the Godhead, the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence, and the harmony of religions. Nature, reason, and experience are the soil from which Hinduism springs, and as these tend to alter age by age so Hinduism has passed through many changes over the centuries, and is, therefore, often described as a synthesis of many religions, rather than the progressive evolution of one.

The manifestations of divine power which are mentioned in the Vedic hymns, although they are only meant to be names or labels and not individualized deities, in the process of time became humanized and defined, and issued in a new religious philosophy—Brahmanism, Brahma being the pre-existent, infinite, impersonal source of all things. Anything that obscures, distorts or distracts from what really is is Maya, illusion.

Out of Brahmanism there developed logically the idea of finite existence, creation being the expression of Brahma in material form,

and with the idea of creation came the notion of coherence, as much between the seen and the unseen as between finite and infinite. The principle of emanation gradually crystallized into the theory of transmigration of soul, and the principle of coherence and interdependence soon emerged as a doctrine of society, of which the caste system in India was the human expression.

Testimony to the deep-rootedness of these basic principles lies in the fact that they above all have held India together in some kind of solidarity when invasion, conquest, foreign ideas, and secularism have overrun the country and threatened to promote fundamental change.

Swami Nikhilananda, in a book on Hinduism, has gone so far as to claim that

During the days of her national misfortune it was religion that saved Hindu society from total disintegration. All through the period of her political decline, saints and mystics have urged her to give up vanity and pride and cultivate love of man and devotion to God. India listened to their advice and survived. In the history of the world she is perhaps the solitary instance of an ancient nation whose soul could not be destroyed by ruthless conquerors, either by force or persuasion, while many younger nations have disappeared after a meteoric display of physical power and glory.

The system of thought developed by Hinduism distinguishes carefully between the influences that play upon the soul, the functions of the mind, and the sense organs, and tries to keep in mind the end in view, the goal of all human striving—that after death the soul assumes a new body in due course, and that the rebirth is inevitably overruled and governed by the inexorable law of *karma*, or destiny. The doctrine of rebirth, based to some extent on the theory that only experience can lead on to the liberating bliss of pure knowledge, and sustained by the thought, ‘What does he know of life who only one life knows?’ is almost synonymous with Hinduism, yet in very truth Hindu tradition holds out the promise that liberation is release from repeated births and deaths. Man’s character and temperament are the legacy of the past, the endowment with which he starts, but this is not to say that he is thereby bound by some hidden, predetermined plan of life. He is not ensnared by new life, or victimized by the law of *karma*. Indeed, as his actions govern his future state, man has something of his own destiny in his own control, for his real soul is divine and therefore free to choose each line of action.

Hindu thought gradually established a system of society based on caste, and the serious question now arises as to whether Hinduism will survive the disruption and breakdown of caste which the present generation is witnessing.

So far in history Hinduism has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for absorbing into itself many diverse elements of race, culture, custom, and religion which it has encountered. The caste system has swallowed up in due course almost every social, intellectual, and religious challenge in turn, and has gradually assigned a place in society to innumerable people in relation to their spiritual, mental, or physical abilities and contribution. But this syncretistic character of Hinduism, which imbibed a minority of Persian, Scythian, Bactrian, Sakan, Kusanan, and other peoples in ages past, has not swallowed up European peoples to anything like the same extent in recent centuries, and therefore in a sense has failed to exercise its ancient power of absorption.

The caste system has been condemned, accused of being anachronistic and unscientific, out of tune with the times, and untenable in modern society. Will it again adapt itself and live on, or will the social revolution now going on in India finish off the system for good? Was it inevitable that the Indian Government itself has had to condemn and outlaw caste, and will this act of legislation finally eradicate it? These are vital questions in the India of today as she moves steadily forward into the new age. It is asking a great deal of a country to expect it to forgo its ancient mode of life and structure of society, yet modern ideas of worth, equality, opportunity, and social betterment cut right across some of the concepts inherent in Hinduism. The clash between old and new is a radical one, and only time and wise direction can mould this upheaval into a revised ordering of society.

But before going any farther, let us look again at what is meant by caste. All human societies have managed to draw some kind of distinction between a relatively small group of leaders and the great majority or mass who are led. Whether the leaders are monarchs, men of thought, ecclesiastics, military, great administrators, or captains of modern industry there is evident a special quality of mind and purpose that outstrips the average run of men. In India this high calibre, intellectual and spiritual, became the Brahmin, the respected, high-born, aristocratic caste, which studied the sacred teachings, derived authority from the knowledge thereof, and became thereby the priestly leaders. They have traditionally an unrivalled place in Indian history and society. They are the natural leaders from their moral authority, intellectual training, and

accepted position. Privilege was theirs as of right. Pandit Nehru came from just such a background.

But in the mid-twentieth century a Brahmin, for all his personal sanctity, aloofness, or superiority, could easily be regarded in some sections of the community as someone not quite 'pulling his weight' in the present state of society. Birth and inheritance count for a great deal, but should they decree who are to be considered the intellectual cream or *élite*? The matter became all the more a vexed question when Indians of relatively low caste began to excel at universities, as many have done, and to show themselves perfectly capable of shouldering responsibility and evince qualities of mind above their caste. In spite of low birth, are they not perhaps 'Nature's Brahmins'?

The Hindu theory that answers this predicament is the doctrine of rebirth, that the reward for virtue, right motive, and moral rectitude in this life is promotion to a high state in the next. In the light of this encouragement, effort and sacrifice are endurable on earth in anticipation of easement and blessing to follow. But if the doctrine of rebirth be called in question, what then? For as soon as the adherents of Hinduism begin to doubt the certainty of the doctrine of reincarnation, then it follows that they equally begin to wonder whether the present distress and suffering which so many Indians endure is bearable any longer. The hope of rebirth is the theoretical justification for things as they are, but old sanctions have to survive the challenge of new thought, and this is precisely where the clash comes. Will Hinduism be able to outlive this challenge, or will it be able to convert an age-old stratification of society into a new occupation-status concept with a greater degree of flexibility and transfer? By insensible passages of time and pressure, the old outlook is losing its stranglehold, especially in the populous city areas.

The modern forces of general education, travel, and inter-communication have tended to weaken the whole structure of caste in any case, and crumble the barriers of ancient custom. The change has set in willy-nilly, though it will take decades, perhaps, for the rural areas to follow suit.

Mythologically and from the *Vedas*, the Brahmin was said to be descended from the head or brain of the Creator. Hence his station as a leader of society and guardian of the national culture.

Next in order came the Kshatriyas, the brave and strong, the arms of the Creator. This caste produced the men of action, men of battle, the high-spirited and generous quality that saw the nation through times of crisis and danger and fear.

Third came the Vaisyas, springing from the thighs of the Maker-Spirit, the strength that showed itself in the enterprising pursuits—trade and commerce and agriculture. This was the caste on which so much of the economic success of the nation depended.

Last of the four major castes were the Sudras, descended, so to speak, from the feet of God. These were the manual workers, men of limited gifts and capacities, but essential to every society and respected for the part they played—physical work.

The duties of the castes are described in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and the virtues of each extolled. Overruling and underpinning the whole system is the sense of interdependence and interlocking, and this in itself afforded great protection. In village life it usually worked well, for everyone well knew and appreciated the position and contribution, the duty and expectation, of everyone else. A village cobbler was the cobbler for that particular community, and woe betide the interloper who dared to set up in rivalry in that miniature 'republic'. Caste, communal loyalty, and village custom offered quite as real protection as any twentieth-century trade union organization. The strong protected the weak in the interests of harmony. No wonder Mahatma Gandhi once said of the caste system at its best:

It is a law of *spiritual economics*. It has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority.

Respect for tradition cemented the system and smoothed its operation. If by great virtue in life a low-caste Indian came to be regarded as a holy man or saint, the Brahmin was as ready to accord him this recognition as anyone else. Therefore, as Gandhi said, the question of 'superiority' or 'inferiority' did not, strictly speaking, enter into it if the system was properly understood.

Nevertheless, in modern society and especially in city life the system began to break down. The thousand and one courtesies, obligations, and taboos demanded of Hindus by caste were difficult to live up to in ordinary life. How could one possibly know when boarding a tram or train whether one had been polluted by contact with someone of lower caste, or in turn had polluted one of higher caste? When Indians wore Western dress and outward signs of caste were scarce the problem was intensified, and the tender conscience, schooled in discipline and respect for custom, was burdened with uncertainty, failure, or remorse.

The ancient and time-honoured method of purifying oneself by ritual washing was all very well when opportunity availed, and in a more leisurely age, but in modern times many a devout Hindu

has to content himself with a 'collective' cleansing at the end of the day, craving pardon for pollution committed, known and unknown. This ceremonial act will die hard in India, and in itself will perpetuate some of the principles inherent in Hinduism, especially that life is a sacred responsibility and trust, and that all life is an aspect of religion.

When the Government of India decreed that the caste system was out of date and a dead letter, it was a recognition of the situation that had already arisen in urban life, but caused confusion of mind in many a rural community. In a sense India was two nations, rural and urban, the simple-living and the more sophisticated, the traditional-minded and the newly-materialist. The caste system, for all its intricate burdensomeness, might long continue in the open country and in village life, but had virtually been destroyed already in the large centres of population.

As the five-year plans began to operate and India set out to become an up-to-date industrialized as well as agricultural society it soon became evident that many of the youth of India, turning to new methods, new incentives, and new freedoms, were only too ready to let slip the bonds of caste. As factories spring up in many parts of India and youth becomes increasingly influenced by modern ideas, it is a serious question as to how long the doctrine of rebirth and the law of *karma*, on which Hinduism so largely rests, can hold their own. Once the idea of rebirth weakens, then the foundations are challenged, and we are in the midst of a new transition period. But this will mean an intellectual revolution in the East, in Buddhist lands as well as India, and that stage has not yet quite been reached.

The accusation used frequently to be heard that Hinduism was not strict enough in enforcing morality. Hindu temples were spoken of as places of low repute, rightly or wrongly. Integrity might be the laudable aim of the Brahmin, but at the same time could mean little to some Hindu merchants and traders, which in turn did Hinduism a disservice. But the substance in any accusation against any particular religion usually bears no relation to the tenets and standards of that religion at its noblest.

A King in ancient India is said to have claimed: 'In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without an altar in his home, no ignorant person, no adulterer, much less an adulteress.' However exaggerated this boast may have been, it does at least point to the high level of moral behaviour expected, and this would not normally be so unless it arose out of religious belief. The *Upanishads* clearly reflect a full appreciation

of the value of the social ethics, and there is every reason to hope that, whatever other violent changes come to Hinduism and to India, the practice of religion will still be prominent and general, though ever more enlightened and purified.

Some practices have grown weak, and among these may be listed the private study of the Hindu scriptures, but even in this respect there are notable exceptions. It is not left only to scholars, priests, teachers, and students to search the sacred books. Men in public life sometimes admit to perusing the scriptures for hope and inspiration, guidance and perspective, and from these ancient writings many have acquired more charity towards their fellow-men, more self-control in their personal lives, and certainly more compassion for the oppressed.

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When I have asked teachers and headmasters in West Bengal and elsewhere if Hinduism was suffering an eclipse in the face of modern challenges, the answer has always been the same, a denial, and they have been at pains to show that in schools there is a lively interest, at home some devotion, and in adult life a great deal of permanent influence. Thus is Hinduism described as resurgent, quickened in pulse, and alive to reform.

It was always a blot in India's history that Hinduism tolerated untouchability, the existence in India of a vast section of the population who were considered to be *outside* caste. Theirs was a pathetic plight, and for generations little was done for them, a gross injustice and neglect in the heart of man and a sad feature of Indian life. Little wonder that many untouchables saw in Christianity a way of escape once Christianity reached them, for Christianity disannulled caste and all its barriers. In certain areas the number converted to Christianity became so numerous that the trend grew into a mass movement, especially in parts of south India. Since Independence the Government of India has done much for the 'scheduled classes' and has tried to remove the stigma and handicap of untouchability. National pride demanded action on their behalf, and a partial consequence of this official interest and concern has been a swing back from Christianity to Hinduism in certain districts, and in the case of one or two notable leaders.

Finally, although it is still too early to see how radical the revolution in society in India will be, how far it will be moulded by Hinduism, and how far the connection between Hinduism and caste will be sustained, one can but venture to think that conventional and institutional Hinduism will endure most of the new stresses and strains, under the protective aegis of Indian national-

ism, that intellectually Hinduism may suffer some definite setback among the better-educated, and that the caste system may tend to reappear in a new outer garment, with the stratification of society based no longer primarily on birth or inheritance, but on new levels of occupation status adapted to the modern age in terms of moral worth to the community. There is something enduring, after all, in the principle of 'spiritual economics', even in a material age.

CHAPTER 11

Buddhism

The claim of one man to have attained Enlightenment while meditating in a Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares on the banks of the Ganges about 521 B.C. was the origin of Buddhism. He who came to be known as the Buddha began life as a Prince, Siddhartha, the son of King Suddodana, Raja of the Sakya clan on the borders of India and Nepal.

In the normal course of events he married and had a son, and should have succeeded to property, leadership, and responsibility. But the privileged life of a Prince did nothing to satisfy the spiritual hunger of Siddhartha Gautama, who deserted home and family in search of a higher peace. His early experiences had a devastating effect upon him, and gave him furiously to think. He met an old man of eighty, a picture of decay. He saw a man in agony, ravaged with disease—black plague of the groin. He encountered a sorrowful funeral procession on the way to burn a corpse on a pyre. Decay, disease, and death—the inevitables of life, the imponderables of all time, the constant factors of suffering. What explanation could there be for it all? Was any analysis, consolation, or clue to be found? The Prince was determined to find out.

Adopting the simple yellow robe and shaven head of a monk, he wandered about northern India, living the life typical of an ascetic—ruminating, begging, and subjecting himself to rigorous self-discipline and self-denial. He set his face against everything material—throne, comfort, pleasure, or help. But even six years of mortification, his period of escape or retirement from the world, brought no real satisfaction. He sought advice from many hermits, priests, teachers, and sects, but was unconvinced by each in turn. He promptly swung to the other extreme of accepting the normal conditions of life. But even the conventional ways did not satisfy his soul, and in a desperate attempt to solve the mystery he resorted

to a lengthy contemplation under the bo or bodhi tree, there suffering all manner of temptations in mind and spirit until he felt he had broken through the barriers of ignorance to a state of Truth, Wisdom, or Enlightenment. A revelation had dawned upon him, and he was filled with a desire to pass it on. He had previously had five followers, but they had left him when he compromised with the way of the world. He now sought them out and declared to them that he had found the Way, the Middle Way between the extremes of asceticism and the worldly life.

His address to them, the famous Sermon at Benares, is said to have set in motion the Wheel of Doctrine, in which he unfolded his teachings. Buddha claimed that all life born is reborn after death, and therefore is within a continuous cycle, of which the Wheel is the appropriate symbol.

Buddha built up his teachings on the foundation of the Four Noble Truths, to which his own observations and insights had brought him, endorsed by the conviction of Enlightenment. These Noble Truths were that suffering is universal, that the basic cause of suffering is wrong desires, that the cure must be the removal of those desires, and that the cure is to walk in the way which he enunciated as the Noble Eightfold Path. These eight ideals are Right Understanding, Right Aims, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Living, Right Effort, Right Remembrance, and Right Concentration. To give a clear-cut practical application to these principles, the Buddha gave Five Precepts which should govern right speech and action. Those who followed his way were not to take life (no killing), were not to take anything that was not given (no plunder or stealing), have no unlawful sexual intercourse, speak no untruth, and have no taking of strong drink.

Buddhism is therefore a highly ethical philosophy of life, a return to fundamental truth (natural law) in the relations of man to man. In its apparent simplicity it rebuked the complex, burdensome, and superstitious traditions of the age which Hinduism had accumulated and bequeathed. Even in its quiet and unobtrusive start it had the spirit and substance of a reforming message, destined gradually to acquire the complete paraphernalia and superstructure of a great institutional religion. It is another historical example of how a few simple ideas can develop in time into an almost unwieldy, self-propelled machine. It ought also to be noted in passing that the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. were centuries of exceptional creative thinking, and that Buddha spans the period that includes the death of Mahavira (founder of Indian Jainism), the birth of Aeschylus, the lives of Pythagoras, Lao-tze (founder of Chinese Taoism), and

Confucius, almost up to the birth of Socrates. It was also the period of Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah, and the minor prophets Ezra and Nehemiah. Greece and the continent of Asia together produced all this world of thought at a time when Europe was arising out of primitive society.

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By birth the Buddha had been a Hindu, and it is therefore not surprising that he had carried over into his later teachings the two fundamental ideas indigenous in the Indian mentality—the idea of the transmigration of souls and of *karma*, that what a person sows in one life he must reap in the next. At no point did he postulate the existence of God, the supreme Creator and Architect of the universe, the Father of mankind and Judge of all nations. He was concerned with personal life and the exercise of the human will at a level which philosophically would be called ‘Humanism’, and in the eyes of all theists—especially monotheists, like Jews, Christians, and Muslims—this would not even qualify to be called a religion in the strict sense. Religion implies God, but if God is discounted or denied then the ‘religion’ is, academically—and theologically—speaking, only a philosophy of life, a moral or metaphysical outlook, and this goes for Confucianism and Marxism as well as Buddhism.

On the other hand, the fact that Buddhism has grown up into a world faith with a message of moral uplift, with its own sacred scriptures, its authoritative councils, its multitude of temples, its hierarchy, its monks and saints, its revered relics and traditions, its official status in many lands and the loyalty of many millions of adherents, stamps it as a religion, nevertheless.

Although, like all the major world religions, it soon suffered internal tension and division (as Christianity is broadly divided into Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant, and Islam into Sunni and Shiah), and broke into Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana Buddhism—the broad and narrow ways—it spread in due course over most of south and east Asia.

By 253 B.C. Buddhism had been introduced to Ceylon by Mahendra. Then from about 80 B.C. it began to decline in India, the land of its birth, but began to spread over into China. In A.D. 220 Buddhism spread to Vietnam, and between A.D. 370 and 390 reached Korea. Between A.D. 420 and 452 Hinayana Buddhism had begun to penetrate Burma, Java, and Sumatra, and Buddhism was growing apace in China until by the sixth century A.D. it took root in Japan. It did not have things all its own way, however, for from time to time it met with fierce persecution in China, had to be pro-

tected in India by rulers, and was eclipsed by Brahmanism in Cambodia. In A.D. 610 it became the State religion in Japan, reached Tibet, and began to spread into Thailand, and in the next century deepened its hold in Indonesia. Then came the challenge from Islam, especially in central Asia, where Buddhism suffered considerably and found itself pushed farther into east Asia. Although Kublai Khan gave favours to Buddhism in China, A.D. 1270-1394, Buddhism had to struggle hard to hold its influence in Cambodia, Laos, and Korea. But in A.D. 1360 it became the official religion of Thailand, one of its strongholds ever since. In A.D. 1480 Hinduism succeeded in displacing Buddhism for first place in Java, and Islam replaced Buddhism in Sumatra. In A.D. 1642 the fifth Dalai Lama became the Priest-King of Tibet, but 100 years later Shintoism became the State religion of Japan, and Buddhism suffered another decline. Today Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand are the strongest Buddhist nations, closely followed by Laos, Cambodia, Korea, and Japan. Tibet, for centuries one of the most notable of all Buddhist countries, is now in a more doubtful and precarious position, but must still be regarded as Buddhist at heart until more is known to the contrary.

Now, the general form that Buddhism takes in each country is not at all the same. In Thailand, for example, it is expected of every adolescent boy or young man that he will at some stage devote about three months to the experience of being a novice monk. In some cases it may be only a few weeks, sometimes more than three months, but at least it is accepted as generally desirable, if not a solemn and national duty, to be attached to a monastery, submit to its discipline, be shaved, don the saffron robe, go begging, and study the scriptures. Consequently the vast majority of Thailand's male population has undergone this discipline and training, and the institutional and influential strength of Buddhism is therefore wide-based. It is even said in Thailand that it does not pay a young man to try to escape this duty or practice, because sooner or later, at some critical juncture in his early life, he will be faced squarely with the questions, 'Have you ever been a monk? To which monastery did you belong?' If this is asked by a prospective father-in-law, the hand of the would-be bride may easily be refused until such time as the young man has fulfilled his obligations. Equally, a potential employer may ask this question at an interview, and reject an applicant who has not completed a minimum of time in a monastery. This short period of training is partly regarded as a matter of loyalty to the ancient traditions of the country, a mild guarantee of moral rectitude, and proof of willing-

ness to live the life of a good Buddhist. The present King of Thailand himself passed through the experience of becoming a monk in 1956, and, although it only lasted a matter of fifteen days for him, he had sampled what is required of others and identified himself intimately with the monastic life. By so doing he gave the tradition an extra boost, and strengthened it at a time when the youth of the nation were being tempted and side-tracked by a welter of modern distractions—such as the cinema, radio, and the general sense of emancipation—to slacken their interest in the practice of religion.

So Thailand is thoroughly permeated—one might almost say saturated—with all that derives from Buddhism in atmosphere and allegiance. It is estimated that 25,000 Buddhist temples stud the countryside, and that at least 50,000 monks have taken vows for life apart from another 90,000 or so monks who are not committed for life. The spiritual head of the State is the Sangharaja, and he can look confidently to the government for enormous financial support. Several million ticals were voted a few years ago for the benefit of Buddhist institutions, such as a special hospital for monks and better training facilities. One must therefore never minimize the hold that Buddhism has on the people of Thailand.

But the full force of secularism has not yet hit Thailand, and it is yet to be seen how the people and their ancient traditions will stand up to it. The people are so easy-going by nature that not until the test comes will it be possible to say whether their Buddhist allegiance rests primarily on custom or conviction. Customs can change, but convictions are by definition deeper. It was in Bangkok that a devout Buddhist, a lecturer at one of the universities, told me that extremely few Buddhists had any real intellectual knowledge of the Buddhist scriptures, and that the religion did not make great demands on them. Superstition had almost become a religion in its own right, and as a directive force was confused with Buddhism. Astrology governed the lives of thousands.

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In Ceylon one's experience is quite different. Buddhism is closely interwoven with the life of the people, but in a different way from Thailand. The revival that has undoubtedly come has been shot through and through with a new self-confidence in Buddhist authority. The new spirit of independence in the State has been shared by the religion, and the gain in strength has been parallel. The religious leaders and authorities count for more. Their office is magnified because they are more set apart. It is not the custom for young men in Ceylon to undergo a session of monastic training, as in

Thailand, and therefore the currency is not debased by being too common. But the high calling of a monk or priest is much respected, and the entire hierarchy consequently has an enhanced authority and reputation.

The Buddhist leaders have convinced a section of the people that they must propagate Buddhism, and this has led to greater energy and initiative and a mood of expansion. It signifies a resurgence of interest in Buddhism as a community, an institutional pride rather than a revival of the teaching of renunciation and self-control. The outward expression of this has been in the increase in processions, meetings, and attendance at festivals, and something of a missionary spirit, all of which has helped to put Buddhism once again into the forefront of the picture in Ceylon.

In 1949 Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, the Professor of Pali in the University of Ceylon, founded an organization known as the World Fellowship of Buddhists. The first Congress was held in Ceylon in 1950, and the next in Japan in 1952. One of the declared aims 'in the hallowed presence of the Buddha' was 'to unite the Buddhist forces of the world . . . in order to further the cause of permanent peace'. Buddhism has been able to point the finger of rebuke at Western civilization, and condemn it for its constant resort to war, thereby offering itself as an alternative to Western thought and advocating peace in the hearts of men. Superficially it is a strong argument, and gains a good hearing. In recent years Buddhism has even turned from its traditional spheres of operation and influence in Asia and dared to launch out to other continents, where a few converts have been made. A world peace pagoda at Rangoon is a symbol both of horizon and key-message. Beside the peace pagoda is a missionary training college, where monks learn foreign languages to equip themselves to propagate their teachings.

It was as recently as 1953 that the Government of India handed over to a Buddhist society the care of Buddhagaya, the place where the Buddha attained Enlightenment. The same year the famous Sanchi relics were brought back to the East from the British Museum in London, and high dignitaries from all over the Buddhist world were present at the re-enshrining, including the Prime Minister of Burma and Pandit Nehru.

But the two most important events which have signalized the revived interest in Buddhism are the Sixth Buddhist Council (1954-6) and the repercussions of the 'invasion' of Tibet in 1959.

The Sixth Buddhist Council, beginning in May 1954 on the Buddha's birthday (the full moon of the month of *Wesak*) and lasting for two years, was a great gathering of hundreds of monks,

lay scholars, and devotees in Rangoon. A vast work of re-searching the scriptures was undertaken, equivalent to a revision of the Bible, and the Council ended on what was reckoned to be the 2,500th anniversary of the passing of the Buddha into Nirvana.

The impact of this prolonged Council cannot be underestimated. It drew Buddhist countries closer to each other. Leaders and delegations exchanged visits. Relics were taken to different countries and venerated, or given as tokens of mutuality. Among the unusual things that occurred, as part of the celebrations, was a visit by the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama to the countries of South Asia.

A good example of the political power which Buddhism had already accumulated by 1956 can be seen in the outcome of a General Election that year in Ceylon. The Prime Minister, leader of the National Party, with its notable record of achievement and success, decided to hold an election ahead of schedule. It was pointed out that this was an inappropriate time, being still a Buddhist Holy Year. Nevertheless, the general election took place as desired, defying the religious authorities. Ardent Buddhists, however, so stirred up the electorate that the Government fell at the polls, and many people were made to realize that the institutional power of religion, especially when linked with nationalism, is not a thing to be ignored. Communists realize this, and are extremely careful to be sympathetic to religious forces in countries where Communism is still but a struggling minority. They know the art of posing as friends, and the game is easy when both have mutual enemies, whether imperialism, institutional Christianity, or war. There are brands of Buddhism which are so atheistic in doctrine and impact (and thus run clean counter to the acceptance of the supernatural, which has been the time-honoured legacy of Asia to world philosophy hitherto) that atheistic Communism finds a ready partner. Even Buddhism in certain forms is not averse to patronage, and Communism finds an easy way in under the guise of friendship. As soon as friendship matures into protection and is securely wedded to national interest, the claim to political consideration is already staked. No imperial power in the past was half as clever in the tactics of infiltration as Communism's flirtations with, and apparent accommodation to, religious forces in the East.

One must always be careful not to generalize from the particular too readily, but two pictures of incidents in Colombo remain indelibly in my memory. The first is of a simple devotional and domestic ceremony. A Sinhalese woman was due to have a baby, and, in accordance with Buddhist rites, the monks were invited to come to the home and invoke a blessing prior to the expected event.

The uncle of the mother-to-be, one of Ceylon's leading statesmen, asked me if I would like to accompany him to this ceremony. I well remember slipping off my shoes at the front door, shuffling across the slippery floor of the entrance hall to a reception-room on the left, where four monks were sitting in a row on straight-backed chairs with eyes downcast in an attitude of extreme modesty, their fans held before them as if to shield them from the world and distraction. Across their laps I quickly noticed a thin line of thread, which then fell to the floor in the direction of the mats on which sat the husband and mother-to-be. The thread ran through their fingers and out of sight down a corridor, obviously leading to the servants' quarters. The symbolism was clear to see. All were linked in fellowship by the single thread as all were joined in heart and mind in the same corporate ritual. The uncle of the mother-to-be sat on a mat, took up the thread and toyed with it, identifying himself at once with all that was happening. Anticipating an invitation to do likewise, half of me anxious to comply and the other half chary of intrusion, I explained in a whisper to the husband how delighted I was to be present and that I would add my prayers to theirs for great blessing and happiness on the family and household. Honour was satisfied, it seemed, and after a few moments of intercession I was able to notice more what the monks were doing. They were chanting non-stop sacred passages suitable to the occasion, and it was evident that the intoning must never flag. Three were chanting while the fourth was drawing breath, and I marvelled at the relative ease and discipline with which this was done. I distinctly remember that we arrived late and departed early 'because the chanting goes on and on'. I also remember the sense of joy and relief when I heard that the baby had arrived safely and that the mother was well. The presence of a Christian at this Buddhist ceremony had had no ill-effects.

What, after all, is common to all religions is a desire to sanctify all the turning-points of life—birth and marriage in particular—and console at the time of death. Spiritual power is drawn upon to bless and fortify and forgive. The religious-minded can, therefore, appreciate each other's ceremonies and practices so long as the spirit of otherworldliness and higher motive are present. One can imagine Confucius, the Buddha, John the Baptist, and perhaps even Seneca and Mohammed agreeing in principle about this. But Marx and Engels and Lenin would surely scoff the idea and ridicule the practice. Atheistic Communism cannot muscle in.

The second picture in my memory is of two Buddhist monks seeing off a Russian of some importance at the airport on his way

back to Moscow from Ceylon. The monks were deferential to a degree, verging on the servile. The Russian was basking in some reflected satisfaction, as if by some gesture or magnanimity he had won over the monks and made them his. As members of his entourage, they were victims or prisoners of his kindness, detached and yet belonging. To say the least, it was strangely incongruous, and did not make sense, except in terms of political expediency and temporary compromise.

The second really important event, besides the 6th Buddhist Council, which has drawn world attention again to Buddhism, is the invasion of Tibet by China in 1959. For many months previously there had been persistent rumours of new roads being built into Tibet, westwards from China, of pressure on the Dalai Lama, of Chinese military reinforcements, of Tibetan apprehensions, of restrictions on Indian traders, and then of compulsory mass migrations of Chinese into Tibet. In terms of overflowing population and land-hunger it was understandable, similar to Japan's attempted justification of some of her attacks on the mainland in Manchuria and China in 1931 and onwards on economic grounds. But the methods involved violated China's constant reiteration of the principle of peaceful coexistence, upset the 1954 Treaty with India respecting Tibet, terrorized large areas of Tibet, and amounted to nothing less than territorial expansion and subjugation. China, model of Marxism in Asia, which had so severely castigated everything that smacked of imperialism, was itself empire-building. The outside world was horrified, noted the iniquity, but did little even to rebuke China. The Chinese leaders lay low for a season to let the resentment die, and well-timed incidents on other frontiers, especially in Laos, drew attention away from Tibet. The Dalai Lama fled to India and was well received. Pandit Nehru, more than anyone else, realized that it was time for a show-down, to expose Communism as fickle and brutal, and within a few months had deposed the Communist Government of Kerala in south India on grounds of inefficient administration. The battle is therefore joined. The Cold War is not a private match between East and West. The tug-of-war between Russia and the United States, or China and Britain, or Indonesia and the Netherlands, or even Japan and China are all but elements in a greater whole. Religion is one of those vital elements, and Buddhism is one as well.

CHAPTER 12

Christianity in Asia

Christianity claims to be a unique revelation of God to man, with power to transform man and society. It differs absolutely from other religions by its stupendous and emphatic claims. Confucius was a learned Government official; Buddha was a natural contemplative; Mohammed was a prophet impelled by an interpretation of God's will. All had a message. But none of these claimed complete divinity, or identified himself so personally with a One, True, Living God as did Jesus of Nazareth. The sacred records declare that He could say of Himself, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father,' 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' and people believed it because it rang true. His teaching struck such a chord in the hearts and minds of His hearers that they believed Him to be not only the Voice of God, the Word spoken by God, but the very Son of God.

The theme of His message was the need to build a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men, a kingdom in which the Redeeming Love of God broke through into the lives of men and gave them new hope, new joy, and new faith—in fact, a spiritual rebirth, not in the next life, as Hinduism and Buddhism suggest, but in this all-important present life. Such was His perfection of character, His astonishing power over disease, His gentle dealing with the needy, and His courageous challenge of the proud and self-sufficient that multitudes flocked to Him. So far from living a life of detachment or privilege, as might well become an intellectual or 'holy man', He was in fact a practical man, a master craftsman, a village carpenter, making and mending things with the same qualities of skill, patience, and perseverance required of ordinary mortals. His moral authority and invincibility upset the accredited religious leaders of His day, who determined by treachery to have Him put to death. Thus, amidst the mounting excitement of a great Jewish festival, for He was a Jew by birth, was He arrested at night, accused falsely

of subversion, and quickly crucified, after the fashion of the Roman authorities, who then governed Jerusalem. Death seemed the end, and He who claimed to be the 'Light of the world' passed the way that all men must go—through the darkness of death. But even the experience of death could not hold Him, and He reappeared to hundreds for a space of some weeks again. He had claimed to be the Lord of all life, and had preached the reality of an after-life. He had even gently prepared His followers for the shock and surprise of resurrection by quietly raising three people to life again: first, a girl who had only been dead a matter of an hour or two, then a young man, the only son of a widow, who had been dead not more than one whole day, and, finally, a close and devoted friend who had been dead four whole days. This last miracle probably helped to sustain the faith of His disciples in the hours of anguish and torment before His own reappearance, for He had told them beforehand that He would come back to them, but it was difficult for them to believe that it could ever be so.

His fortitude under trial, His forgiveness of His tormentors, His unquenchable trust in His Father's prevailing power to bring good out of evil demonstrate not only the remarkable character that was His, but also constitute steps in the process of man's redemption. Crucifixion and Resurrection, taken together and followed by Ascension to glory, are historic events central to the whole Christian message. The Christian religion is rooted in history, and is therefore far removed from any suggestion of fantasy, conjecture, or idle speculation. It has to do not only with a message of love from a God of love, but with the Messenger who came among men, lived as man among men, taught, healed, suffered, died, and rose again, and now lives and reigns eternally.

Paradoxically, this world religion, although it originated in Asia, failed to establish itself as an Asian religion. All world religions of any consequence have sprung from the continent of Asia, yet so steady was the movement of Christianity westwards that it quickly became involved with the mighty Roman Empire, then with Europe generally, and in recent centuries with the Western Hemisphere as well, so that in the minds of millions Christianity is simply regarded as a Western religion, with only a slender right to extend itself into Asia and Africa, and little right to dislodge prior, alternative faiths. For this reason, much of Christianity's progress into various Asian countries has been regarded by Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and others as an unwarrantable intrusion, and one to be heartily resisted. They have often forgotten, and do not wish to be reminded, that all the background and origins of Christianity are Asian, and

that historically Christ Himself, apart from a brief childhood flight to Egypt, was born of a Hebrew mother in a small village in western Asia. Christianity can justly claim to be indigenously Asian, and its over-identification with the West has often been an embarrassment, a liability, and a serious hindrance to the proper understanding of its nature.

Christianity first expanded from Palestine into Syria, Asia Minor, Armenia, and other parts of the area we now describe vaguely as 'Middle East'. Tradition has it that St. Thomas, one of Christ's immediate circle of disciples, carried the 'good news' to the Malabar Coast of south India, and it is a remarkable fact that the Indian Christian Church of this part of India has an unbroken connection with original Christianity. Known as the Mar Toma (St. Thomas) or Syrian Church of south India, it is undoubtedly one of the most ancient outreaches of early Christianity, and has maintained its independence ever since, standing proof of antiquity, acceptability, and honour. Meanwhile, the overall momentum of Christianity was westward along the Mediterranean countries until it reached the Atlantic seaboard. The emergence of Mohammedism, complete with militancy and the art of persecution, smothered Christianity in some areas, drove it into defensive self-preservation in other countries, and effectively stemmed its progress eastwards into Asia for some time to come.

The Christian Church in Europe—with its Eastern centre at Constantinople, and its Western centre at Rome—never lost sight of its world-wide mission, but was too busy trying to convert Europe to have strength for evangelistic activity farther afield. The period of the Crusades produced an upsurge of vigour, but the motives behind the Crusades were more sentimental, aggressive, territorial, and of prestige value than truly Christian.

In fact, the Crusades distorted Christianity by bringing the defence of the gospel and the point of the sword into so close an association that in subsequent centuries it has been hard to distinguish between the two motives. The martyrdoms of the early centuries more truly reflected the real spirit of Christian witness than war can ever claim to do, and the over-easy acceptance of war as the legitimate method of solving many a major issue has damaged the reputation of Christianity immeasurably in the eyes of the East.

From the moment the Church came under the protection of the State in the days of Constantine the Great (c. A.D. 325) the Church has tended to be subject to secular pressure and secular influences, which involves a mundane power and authority not altogether consonant with its message and mission. The inevitable increase in

institutional organization and authority as the Church expanded beguiled her into the ways of power politics, which, once started, proved difficult to redress. Thus in the course of time the Western or Latin Church, with its pivot in the Imperial capital in Rome, came to crave power, first ecclesiastical, then organizational, and ultimately, in turn, political, territorial, and diplomatic. As the territorial has disappeared in recent times (A.D. 1870), the diplomatic and organizational have been increased until the superstructure and network is now so extensive as to constitute unquestionably one of the major totalitarian forces at work in the world today. Such power, concentrated in one body, can be at one and the same time both wholesome and harmful, depending on the motive and the spirit through whom that power is exercised. The East may relish and desire the gospel of Christ, and venerate the Person of Jesus as portrayed in the gospels, but still remain suspicious of the means and methods by which the 'good news' is spread. To most Asian non-Christians the Church is still 'foreign'. Only the indigenous Church can really be responsible for the conversion of Asia, and in this generation considerable persecution and restriction, partly the by-products of nationalism, resurgent (Eastern) religions, and genuine antipathy obstruct the way.

If these two conclusions be correct, that compromise with war and over-secularization have blunted the edge of Christianity and distorted what it really is, we must now return to see how Christianity began to invade Asia seriously. Several decades in the Middle Ages produced adventurous Christian pioneers. The gospel reached Peking. But the witness was short-lived, and left little impact until the decade 1542-52, when Francis Xavier, one of the original Jesuits, set out for Goa in India, and from there sailed as far as Japan, evangelizing as he went. He died on an island off the south coast of China, and his example of zeal is still legendary in the East.

For the next 200 years the spread of the Christian gospel was pathetically slow until the acquisition by European powers of growing empires in Asia. Then for the space of 150 years the pace accelerated rapidly and thousands of missionaries, teachers, clergy, doctors, and nurses poured from Western countries into many lands of Asia, and the Christian Church increased from hundreds to thousands and eventually to millions. It is reliably estimated that by 1952 in the area from Pakistan to Japan there were approximately 28 million Roman Catholics and 13 million Protestants and Orthodox, giving a total of just over 40 million Christians. Numerically it compares unfavourably with the great Eastern religions, and

Christians are far outnumbered by Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists in particular. But nevertheless this dramatic expansion alters the entire perspective in Asia religiously, for the Christian Church has never been as strong in Asia as it is today, or so indigenous.

At first many Hindus and Buddhists were relatively unconcerned at the infiltration of Christian ideas, and doubtless expected to be able to absorb them or discount them. In Confucian China opposition was far more virulent, and Christians suffered periodic persecution and martyrdom. Nevertheless, as Christians came to establish themselves as outstanding pioneers and leaders, either as scholars of Eastern languages or interpreters of Asian classics, and everywhere proved themselves a match for high-born Indian intellectuals, native princes, or the cultured Chinese mandrinate, sympathy gradually swung round towards the Christians, who came to be respected as educationists.

Christian schools, colleges, and universities became a distinct feature of the Asian scene, especially in the half-century 1900-50, and no one will ever gainsay what this has meant to countries like India and China in particular.

Christian mission schools opened a door of opportunity. Countless eager and thirsty minds benefited by this first introduction to modern learning, and thousands of students progressed all the way to university degree status. In turn, many of these became Government servants, administrators, specialists, and college lecturers, and a newly-educated professional class began to appear. In many instances students were assisted financially to continue their education in universities in Europe and America, and it is largely from these educated nationals that Asia's best reformers have been drawn, political agitators, and architects of independence—Gandhi, Sun Yat-sen, Nehru, Kotelawala, and scores of others that spring to mind. Some retained their gratitude for what Western education—Government, mission or private—had done for them. Others lived to resent such benefits and to work for the day when their own countries would be able to provide what for the time being 'foreigners' had had to offer.

Statistics are not readily available to show the full impact of Western education on the reawakening of Asia in terms of personalities, and although it is outside the scope of this book it is relevant in this context to single out China as probably the country above all others which valued most the educational facilities offered at the beginning of this century and which was quickest to utilize them to her own advantage. The Americans undoubtedly made the greatest contribution, with their broad vision, their generous

expenditure, and open-heartedness. Hundreds of mission schools run by American missionaries were established all over the thickest populated areas of China, and through these an influential section of the public was equipped by modern education to assist in building the new China. By the terms of the Boxer indemnity, many Chinese were enabled to pursue their studies in American universities, and there learnt the meaning of Western democracy, personal freedom, and a modern outlook on science, the exchange of ideas, toleration, and so forth. What was the result? In 1912—as early as that—when the old régime, the Manchu Dynasty, had just been overthrown and the new Republic established, it is estimated that 65 per cent. of the Government officials in the south were the product of Christian education, and that already three members of the Cabinet in Peking were Christians. But this was an uneasy and transient impact. Sun Yat-sen, some of his Nationalist generals, later Chiang Kai-shek and many of his adherents all had the support of important American and British interests. Although Western governments were reluctant to commit themselves in support of the Nationalists, and business interests were doubtful whether Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek were capable of giving China lasting political stability, numerous branches of the Christian Church tended to look upon China as perhaps the most hopeful recruit to Christianity in the world. China's traditional respect for scholarship and the scholar, and the teacher-pupil relationship, had eased the entry of the West into the proud mind of the East. It was to be a stage in the process of reawakening, and perhaps the first challenge in the direction of a future cultural renaissance.

But there were serious reactions to follow.

The attraction of the West led to an aping of Western notions, Western dress, and the Western way of life generally, which amounted almost to idolatry in some people. This in turn was an affront to the best that lived on in China—her traditional ways, her dignity, classicism, family life, ancestor-worship, restraint, industry, ingenuity, and profound pride. The two were bound to clash. The ancient and the modern both claimed to reflect the true mood of the country, and when the eruption took place, as it did at intervals, it usually took the form of a persecution of the minority, i.e. the foreigner. In 1900 the antagonism against corrupt, ineffectual, and backward government was skilfully deflected by the Government and made to appear as an attack on the foreigner, and a short-lived terror ruled in places. Humiliation, torture, and death were the measure of the hostility. Subsequent waves of resentment were less savage, but no less determined or pointed. China's dignity was

stung to the quick by the admission of foreign superiority and assistance, and it became abundantly clear that the real China would never be satisfied until China cut the apron-strings of all foreign dependence and stood erect in her own strength and with her own spirit. When that day came, as it did in 1949, with the victory of the Communists over the Nationalists, the close association of the Christian Church with the rulers of China in the preceding thirty-eight years came to an end. The connection is broken, and the new régime officially discredits religion. What will eventually happen to Christianity in China it is far too early to say, except that foreign missionaries have been turned out of the country, much property has been confiscated, Christianity is ridiculed in official circles, and the squeeze of persecution aimed at Chinese leaders. Atheistic Communism and active Christianity do not coalesce in China or anywhere else. Where religion is vital and strong, Marxism must find the going hard, and this is one of the reasons why Communism makes slow headway in South and South-East Asia, where religious instincts and customs still prevail.

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What are the chances of Christianity rooting deeply in southern Asia, and how will this be accomplished? Arguments favourable and otherwise can be advanced from all sides. For some the moral appeal of Christianity will be the decisive factor. For others the intellectual satisfaction, simple yet profound, will appeal most. Yet others will look to 'good works', the works of mercy, compassion, and self-sacrifice, which set such a fine example of one side of Christ's life—the healing, forgiving, and redemptive. This practical aspect puts other religions to shame and has stirred them to similar endeavour.

Often has an Indian Member of Parliament risen in the Lok Sabha (the Lower House) in New Delhi to ask when the Government intends to evict foreign Christian missionaries from Indian soil. Time and again Pandit Nehru, himself a non-Christian, has pointed out that it was only Christian doctors and nurses, priests and teachers, who were prepared to deal with the leper problem. But for these Christians, hundreds of thousands of sick and diseased persons would be suffering untold pain and misery, and the Christian Church has taken the initiative among religions in alleviating this burden. So soon as Hindus and Buddhists waken to the same sense of compassionate responsibility, the Government of India may review the situation, Pandit Nehru has said, but until that time comes Christian missionaries deserve to stay in India and the Government appreciates and honours their work. In this context,

Christian teaching and worship are not mentioned, only the advantages of medical care.

But none of these validities touches the real rootedness of Christianity in southern Asia. First and foremost is the fact that the wisdom of the Church has always decreed that the responsibility of leadership ideally should be in the hands of local people, nationals of the country concerned. Almost as soon as Europeans arrived in the East, they kept in view the need to train local leadership, and the principle of an ultimate transfer of responsibility from white leadership to coloured in the Christian Church in the East was accepted and understood. In this matter of policy the Church has been far ahead of the State, and has been far freer of prejudice and reluctance to concede. Institutionally, in the last 150 years the Christian Church has carried out a phenomenal advance in indigenous expansion and growth, and the process had been a logical one. In the early nineteenth century colporteurs had carried the Scriptures and simple tracts into distant rural areas, after missionaries had laboured for years to learn innumerable dialects and translate the Gospels into them. Many chaplains first went out to the East either as garrison chaplains or attached to large trading firms or as clergy to European communities. Only when the great missionary societies got into their stride did missionaries begin to multiply sufficiently to build up congregations quite apart from the European communities. The normal custom, where possible, was for a church, a hospital, and schools to be grouped together as a separate settlement or compound, thus providing fellowship, consolidation, and means of support. The most promising young men and women were given every encouragement to be educated, and some of these discovered a vocation to become evangelists, clergy, teachers, doctors, or welfare workers. As training centres and theological colleges became established and staffed, nothing any longer stood in the way of ordination candidates being trained in their own country without the added expense and delay of going all the way to Europe or America for specialized training. From the moment national clergy were elected or appointed to posts of the highest authority the process was complete. The Roman Catholic Church can boast of an Indian Cardinal. The Church of England or Anglican Communion has consecrated Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and others as bishops since the beginning of this century. The Protestant Reformed Churches have likewise promoted national leaders to office as moderators and senior administrators. It is therefore possible to say that Christianity in Asia is now widely indigenous, and in places has been so for at least several

generations. The present likelihood is that nothing can now dislodge it, as in the past, and indeed there is no telling at what pace Christianity may gain ground. For the moment Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are all awake to the challenge, and closely associated with strong nationalist feeling.

But there is a chance that as nationalism finds economic and political satisfaction, and consequently begins to mellow, a new period of tolerance may emerge which is the possible pre-condition for an increase in the strength of Christianity. But again it is imperative for Christianity in Asia to shake off the false impression it has of being a Western religion, and this is going to be a continuing handicap.

Christianity's difficulty will not be so much in its intellectual appeal as in the temptation to compromise, and a few examples may serve to confirm this risk.

While much Hindu thought is polytheistic, Christianity is essentially monotheistic. One would therefore imagine that the gulf between them is fixed and unbridgeable. But simple and subtle minds, brought up with the idea of reconciling all truth, have found an easy way out, a way which vitiates Christianity, but makes it acceptable to tolerant Hindus. The latter point to the Trinity in Christianity and claim to have a doctrine basically similar in their own idea of Trinity. But a theological examination would demonstrate the incompatibility of the two conceptions.

Again, the Hindu who has only a nodding acquaintance with Christianity will perhaps say that between God and man is an entire sequence or range of intermediaries or mediators—the Virgin, the archangels, saints, patriarchs, priests—so that the multiplicity of deities and objects of veneration in Hinduism links closely with the hierarchy and calendar of saints in the Christian Church. In this respect the images of the Roman Catholic Church, together with ornateness, pageantry, elaborate ceremonial, frequent festivals, and institutional strength, all have an appeal to millions in the East.

The Protestant appeal is differently based. It is grounded in a knowledge of the Gospel, to which there is a personal response, an emphasis on moral teaching, stress on an inward awareness of God, the duty of 'good works', and simplified forms of worship. The personal factor takes precedence over the institutional, and the 'Kingdom of God', which is in the building, is of more vital concern than the visible 'Church', which is transient.

The differences of emphasis are so considerable and deep-rooted that they have a distinct bearing on the way they react to danger

and persecution. The Protestant is basically an individual believer. He can fall back on the 'means of grace' which have hitherto sustained him—reading the Bible, the life of private prayer, fellowship with other believers where possible, an overwhelming sense of Divine Providence—until the time of persecution blows over. In other words, he tends to retreat into himself, yet can keep his faith intact and inviolate. He is perfectly aware of the corporate sense of belonging to the 'blessed company of all faithful people', and is sustained by public worship, the sacraments, and institutional loyalties as well, but can sit lightly on these if necessity requires it.

The Catholic, on the other hand, looks to the ordained priesthood, the hierarchy of the Church, for almost everything—for leadership in worship, the administration of the sacraments, and moral instruction. Institutional authority is paramount, even sacrosanct and indispensable, and by logical deduction so exclusive as almost to dismiss all other Christians as outsiders. This is one of the saddest features of Christianity, the vertical division of Christendom between Protestant and Catholic, arising out of fundamental disagreements in a few points of doctrine, policy, and priority.

The picture is not quite complete unless we also mention the Orthodox Church, which has branches in many parts of Asia. This Church can claim to have grown out of the early churches which sprang up in Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Alexandria, and in many other centres in the eastern Mediterranean long before the Church of Rome had become centralized and strong. These churches of Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Cyprus, Armenia, Abyssinia, and Egypt can justly claim to be historically older than the Western churches of, say, France, North Africa, and Spain, and they constitute autonomous parts of the great Orthodox Church of the East. Together, they might almost be called 'original' Christianity, and to this day they are exceptionally traditionalist, rather self-defensive, slow to move with the times, and hide-bound by history. In general they look to tradition, the early Councils of the Church, the Creeds, and their own Apostolic system of government for proof of validity and continuity. Some of the Churches are independent, as, for example, the Armenian, but the majority of these autonomous branches look to the Oecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople as the Head of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the other four senior Patriarchs are the 'Popes and Patriarchs', to give them their full title, of Alexandria 'and all the Africas', Jerusalem, Antioch, and Moscow 'and all the Russias'. Even the word 'papa', used affectionately for 'father' of the flock, was first used in Alexandria, and when it assumed the status of a title it

became attached to the senior bishops of the Eastern Church. All Orthodox Patriarchs are therefore Popes by historic right and usage, in spite of the attempt of the Church of Rome to usurp the title for the sole use of the Pope in Italy. The conflict between Constantinople and Rome as centres respectively of the Eastern and Western Church became so acute that it led to a definite break in relations in the eleventh century, and so far every attempt to heal the schism has failed. The very fact that Christendom has three separate expressions—Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—is confusing to the would-be convert in Asia, and made it possible for Chou En-lai on one occasion at the Bandung Conference to speak of religious freedom offered to ‘Catholics and Christians’, among others.

But there is a brighter note on which to end this chapter. In recent decades national Christian councils have grown up in most Asian countries, and in these councils most Protestant Churches now work and think together in a newfound fellowship and harmony. Furthermore, these national Christian councils are linked together in a vast international organization known as the World Council of Churches, with headquarters in Geneva, and through this body the Protestant Churches have developed a new sense of co-operation and cohesion. With this greater organic strength, as well as roots striking deep, Christianity is more powerfully entrenched in Asia than ever before in history.

PART IV SUMMARY

CHAPTER 13

Perspective

The time has come to try to sum up what the substance of the foregoing twelve chapters may hold for Asia, and what these dynamic factors may portend. At great risk in so daunting a task, let us divide the matter under two heads, perspective and prospects. Perspective is the attempt to see these forces in proper relation to each other and to ascertain a present focus, like a few camera shots in a sweeping and changing panorama, a chapter which may be out-of-date all too soon, but will yet give some idea of how things looked in the early 1960s. The last chapter, prospects, will concern itself with the longer-term view, with expectations and straws in the wind, anticipating the yet unborn. Time and events alone will shatter or confirm the findings.

First, then, the perspective in South Asia. What realities march before the mind's eye in close formation at the beginning of this new decade? Revolutionary leaders now turned elder statesmen (it is still the age of Nehru, U Nu, Sukarno, and the new generation has not yet completely taken over); the achievements and pride generated by the industrial revolutions; the gigantic problems of poverty and population; an epoch of emancipation in which the sense of transition is giving way to a sense of the permanent; the acute realization that the times have completely changed and that

there is now no putting back the clock; the throb of fresh cultural development; and last, but not least, the 'over the shoulder' eye on China, which is the overwhelming world factor of this age.

Here, then, are seven of the major realities that must find a place in the present perspective. Let us take each in turn.

The Statesmen. The age of revolution in Asia is still so recent that most officials in responsible places today were either brought up in the day of struggle or have vivid memories of what they had to fight for. The new decade will see a change in outlook, for those who gradually take their places will be the first-generation beneficiaries, who can afford to take certain assumptions for granted. They can build on a foundation already secured. With them is bound to come a certain shift of gravity. In India they may not idolize Mahatma Gandhi as much as millions of his contemporaries and followers did, but they will still venerate his name. The India they now know has changed in outward appearance and international stature from the India of thirty years ago.

It is tempting to think that the rising personalities of the present may not compare favourably in character and drive with the pioneer leaders of the past. The 'cult of personality' is dangerous in any case. But there is that important distinction to be drawn between incontestable moral leadership, which is vital to a nation's well-being, and self-glorification, which can be the undoing of a nation in the long run. A great deal will depend on the integrity of the younger leaders of today, many of whom are high-minded while others are self-seeking.

Even within this change-over, which is part of the present perspective, an interesting development is happening. Older Asians flocked to universities in Europe and America—Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Leyden, and scores of others. Now they are becoming proud of their own, and that is as it should be. One of the liveliest and most hopeful aspects of nationalism is the determination to raise the level of scholarship in universities and colleges throughout Asia until they compete in renown with the standards of the West. No wonder, therefore, that thousands of the younger scientists, politicians, teachers, and industrial leaders are the products of Delhi, Djakarta, Tokio, Manila, Peking, Singapore, and elsewhere. Asian leadership is now more educationally indigenous, and this is one of the changing patterns.

The Industrial Revolution. Though Asia started a century to a century and a half behind Europe and America in developing

modern industry, and in many areas is still extremely backward and listless, the rate of progress in the 1950s was reasonable in most countries, remarkably energetic in others (e.g. India), but phenomenal in East Asia (especially China and Japan). Overall planning expressed in five-year plans has begun to bring industry side by side with agriculture, and the rising generations are used to new noises, faster mobility, the latest production techniques, and the satisfaction of results. The face of Asia is changing as improved communications, factory life, and economic development move on apace. The great Indian statesman, diplomat, and writer, Sardar K. M. Panikkar, has singled out the growth of the great cities of the East as the new phenomenon of the age, for, as he says in his book, *Asia and Western Dominance* (p. 501) these cities—such as Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Allahabad and countless others in South Asia—are almost independent units, have imbibed new civic traditions, and have helped to create wealthy middle classes from which future leadership may be expected. These cities, he claims, ‘may well remain Europe’s chief monument in the East’. From Karachi to Singapore, Hong Kong to Colombo, imposing buildings in Western style testify to the day of ‘Western dominance’. In these cities, thanks to available capital, industry took root. In these cities, thanks to educational facilities, science and the arts flourish anew. In local elections and on municipal councils of these great cities many a budding politician has sharpened his wits, exercised his oratory, put pressure to practice, and set course for ‘Congress’. City experience has led sometimes to national responsibility.

The industrial revolution has involved a social and economic revolution throughout the regions of South Asia, and the orientation of life is now different for millions. At the end of the First World War I remember the first time an aeroplane flew over a certain country district in South China, and, as a boy, trying to reassure the people working in the rice-fields that the machine was no ‘messenger of ill’, but a means of travel controlled by man. I also remember my *amah* putting me on a train at Kowloon, and saying that she would run behind, never having seen a train before. Those days are long gone, and the changes that have come are here to stay.

But there is another aspect of this economic and industrial change which must not be overlooked. It is made possible by the assistance and co-operation that comes from private and international sources, the Colombo Plan and the generosity of many countries. Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, the United States, Canada,

Portugal, Italy, France, Britain, the Soviet Union, and others—all have their stake in the progress of Asia, part investment and part construction.

This point leads directly to the third factor in the present perspective—the gigantic problems of *poverty and population*. The degree of poverty might gradually be lessened were it not for the enormous annual increase in population in every country of South Asia. The two problems intensify each other, and no short-cut solutions avail. Desperate efforts to control population by propaganda advocating ‘family planning’ have met with little or no response. Government schemes for touring towns and villages explaining ways and means of restricting the size of families are powerless to influence the multitude, and Government attitudes to the problem vary considerably in any case. Some encourage abortion. To others, a vast population is considered a national asset, especially when policy involves expansion. But prodigious population can also lead to an impersonal and fatalistic view of humanity as a labour force, the instrument of progress and destiny. Communism goes so far as to incorporate a clause on the duty and dignity of work into the constitution of a country, thus in principle calling out everyone in the same cause and condemning any who might be drones. Thus, although no immediate solution can be seen to the problem, the danger has to be faced that an attitude of recklessness can easily develop unless officialdom maintains a high degree of moral responsibility. Desperation, quite as much as expansionism and felt strength, can lead to war, and this horror is to be avoided at all costs. So far, from 1945 to 1960, every crisis which has led to hostilities—Korea, Vietnam, the Levant—has been satisfactorily contained and an armistice reached. But peace is the one intangible factor which can never be taken for granted.

Poverty in Asia is an international concern, and some nations outbid each other in an endeavour ‘to champion and succour the undeveloped countries’ of the East. But what is the nature and extent of this aid? And how does it lend perspective to the total picture?

Undeniably, by far the most generous financial benefactor in South Asia since the last war has been the United States, which has spent altogether in grants or credits a total of about \$4,000 million annually. Soviet Russia claims to spend an annual total of \$1,900 million, nearly half that amount. But there are fundamental differences in calculation. First and foremost, practically all American aid is true generosity in the form of outright grants.

Americans have said to me in South Asia, 'We want no gratitude; we merely want to help.'

To give a sample of American munificence as lavished in many places, there exists an affiliation scheme in Indonesia by which the Medical and Economic Schools of the University of Indonesia in Djakarta are linked with the University of California, the Schools of Engineering and Agriculture with the University of Kentucky, and the School of Political Science of the University of Gadjah Mada (Jogjakarta) with the University of Johns Hopkins. In Bogor, West Java, American funds have *given* a whole college, complete with buildings, equipment, teaching staff, and endowment, and expect back nothing in return, except the satisfaction of knowing that it has helped to meet a desperate need. Yet the extraordinary impression forced upon one in South Asia was that this was expected of the United States. America was regarded as overflowing with wealth, with a surplus that had to go somewhere, and lucky the country that got it. Therefore, gratitude, though real, soon wore thin, and in time will be easily forgotten. Surplus wealth can also be looked upon as charity or favour, and neither of these are of gracious intent to the self-respecting Asian. American aid, for all its philanthropic and humanitarian motive, has its serious limitations, both in the giving and in the response.

The Russian approach is utterly different, and has often generated a far more beneficent atmosphere. Russian aid is nearly all in credits or loans, and therefore cannot compare with the American system of outright grants. The Soviet figures are based on amounts either negotiated or promised, but not necessarily carried through, whereas the American figures represent amounts actually paid out.

The United States will never receive their money back; the Soviet Union will have theirs back with interest. Some Russian loans are paid back in kind; others have never been taken up; a few have been cancelled or never materialized. It is estimated that the real total of Russian credits and loans since 1953, including military aid, is probably no more than \$500 million. This is considerably less than Great Britain's aid to underdeveloped countries in the three years 1954-7, which amounted to nearly £230 million, or approximately \$645 million.

The plain fact is that the Russian method is psychologically sounder. It does nothing to injure national pride, nothing to smack of the begging bowl; in fact, very much the reverse; it appeals to the borrower's capacity to repay, and makes the deal an honest banking transaction. The result is gratitude, and a strengthening of relationship. In terms of perspective, therefore, we see that

national progress depends on economic aid, and economic aid is influenced by subtle competition.

Fourth in the current perspective is the sense of transition hardening into political stability. New nations which were precarious in their very existence in 1950 have held their independence, and consolidated their 'nationality' in the next ten years, and now look out on the world with an assurance unthinkable a few years ago. The confidence they had in 1950 was built on hope and will-power. The confidence in 1962 is surer based on achievement and pride.

The transition period is not over, but the end of this particular era is in sight. The forces of Western democracy, Communism, military rule, and paternalism are still in full play and full vigour, and no common constitutional pattern operates throughout Asia. The countries that cried out for freedom, and acquired it, now require discipline to use it, and it is in this matter of discipline that authority is severely tested. Is benevolent despotism the answer? For the only way that disruptive forces within a nation can be brought to account, and the only way that self-interest and corruption can be controlled, is by vigilance and discipline at the centre of affairs. This treatment stiffens a nation, and brings out the best in the long run. Kemal Ataturk thought so in Turkey. Mao Tse-tung transformed China in this way. President Ayub Khan is doing it in Pakistan. Bit by bit it may become the only way of attaining political stability in certain nations in South Asia.

This is not to say that democracy has failed, for in many countries democracy is the hope and living experiment of the people. One Indian Ambassador, endeavouring to sum up the principles that underlie the administration of India, quoted:

Exact and equal justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none; . . . a jealous care of the right of election by the people; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; . . . the diffusion of information and arraignment of all abuses at the bar of human reason; freedom of religion, freedom of the Press and freedom of person.

The quotation, albeit from Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address, reflects an idealism to which India approximates in practice. Yet these noble sentiments need the assistance of a firm hand at the helm, and most Asians understand firmness. Weak liberalism would be the undoing of all good government, though a

liberal instinct in a strong ruler would carry the multitude or majority. Benevolent despotism is just in the perspective.

Communism can be a despotism; many would insist that it is. It can be exacting to the point of ruthlessness, and at that point forfeits benevolence. Democracy, on the other hand, thinks of despotism as harsh, and benevolent despotism as a contradiction in terms. But benevolent despotism remains a midway alternative, linking the national interest with direction from above. Its justification can still rest on the mandate of the people as expressed in free and fair elections on a party basis and majority rule.

The democratic principle has been put to the test again in elections in Malay (1959), Burma (1960), Kerala (1960), and Ceylon (1960), and the countries of South Asia generally are showing that they understand and value the electoral system, so long as choice avails and lists are not predetermined.

Fifthly, the perspective in Asia must not be confused with a past that has really gone. Those who once knew the East and lament the passage of time are quickly shown to be out of sympathy with the new changes in the East. There is no putting the clock back. Two remarks of K. M. Panikkar will substantiate this: 'Any return to a purely Asian tradition is ruled out by the growth of social, economic and political forces which no country in Asia had to deal with in the past' (p. 500). The viewpoint of 1962 cannot be expected to compare with the standpoint, say, of 1940 or 1950. To demonstrate this point, Panikkar had already written a few pages earlier: 'Today, as a result of contact with the West, untouchability has been abolished, and caste is no longer king in India'. A more categorical proof of change could scarcely be imagined.

For each nation the perspective will vary, but it must be the present, and as each passing year influences the habits and attitudes of the people so the perspective will move along with them, and reflect, in a measure, their minds and their hopes. Pakistan, for example, is no longer the nation that pivoted on a Karachi of half a million inhabitants, or of a Karachi that swelled to 2 million souls. Pakistan today conjures up a picture of undulating countryside near Rawalpindi being cleared of forests for the building of a new capital; fresh supplies of natural gas being engineered and piped, more plentiful even than Sui; and of a strong-minded, Army-trained President, clear-minded, good-natured, and forceful. A new capital, new resources, good leadership—could a new nation want more?

Sixth in the perspective is the revived cultural development throughout South Asia. The immediate indication of this is the crop

of new universities, and the tens of thousands of places for students in advanced studies that have been created. The target of 'catching up with the West' has stimulated a vigorous academic momentum, and governments are now sponsoring ambitious schemes to provide the student population with libraries, faculty facilities, travel scholarships, and all that encourages research and the meeting of minds. Schemes are far-reaching, but progress is slow and the difficulties stupendous.

One of the greatest problems is, of course, language, and the only one common to the whole area is English, which, though incomparably useful, is nevertheless foreign. The perpetuation of English is an affront to the instinct of nationalism, yet there is no satisfactory alternative. Somehow or other the multiplicity of languages and dialects has to be reduced, for each language also has a separatist influence which runs counter to the trend towards unity. Language needs to be an instrument to fortify the sense of national solidarity, and thus the major languages are being officially encouraged at the expense of their minor rivals, and this produces provincial resistance. The only answer is for some kind of synthesis in time, the gradual incorporation of words, idiom, and constructions from tangent influences into an available major language group in such a way as not to destroy literary merit or devalue the resultant hybrid language in the estimation of the public. Experiment of this nature is highly precarious, but is going on quietly all the time, and will take time to mature and validate itself in literature.

In Indonesia, for example, the attempt is being made to spread a single language over the whole range of islands, 3,000 miles in extent, and make it national. Based on Malay, this language includes words and ideas which have come from Arabic, Sanskrit, European and Chinese sources. It is still in the making, and has about it a certain flexibility which is the envy of other neighbouring countries. This 'Bahasa Indonesia' is the official language of the country, yet it is unknown to millions of Indonesians, who still cling to their own local languages and dialects. That is the problem everywhere.

In some countries the synthesis of background cultures has been quite satisfactorily reached, and the Philippines is as good an example as any. The Arabic-Malayan and the Spanish strains have all found their place. But elsewhere the problem is sometimes insoluble, and at times becomes critical.

In Ceylon, where Sinhalese is the language of the vast majority (roughly 7 million out of a total of 9 million, most of whom are also

Buddhist), there are also 2 million Tamils, a million of whom are Ceylon-resident over many centuries, and the other million are Indian Tamils, in Ceylon as an immigrant labour force and quite likely to want to return to India. The Tamils are chiefly Hindu. The other three-quarters of a million population comprise Ceylon Moors of Arab stock, Indian Moors, Dutch Burghers, Malays, Europeans, and Eurasians. As long ago as 1944 the State Council decided to make Sinhalese an official language, and later amended this decision to include Tamil. In 1956 a Bill was passed which made Sinhalese the only official language, and the Tamil-Sinhalese tension which resulted has been an abiding problem since.

But the cultural momentum is tied up with the racial and communal in other ways too.

The Hindu-Muslim synthesis, which took centuries to build and which the British inherited and retained, is now disrupted. British administration could not prevent the communal cleavage, which was at once ethnic, religious, and social. So the cultural revival, when it comes, and which is bound to follow in the wake of political emancipation and stability in due course, will have to follow patterns inherent in a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan, Malaya, and Indonesia, and a Buddhist Burma, Ceylon, and Thailand. Each country is beginning to produce its experts in literature and the arts, in research and scientific knowledge. All show an awakened interest in scholarship, touching architecture, archaeology, music, dancing, calligraphy as well as such subjects as engineering, geology and the like. The effect of this on cultural development is already visible. Just as the Graeco-Roman civilization left its legacy in amphitheatre, agora, arena, colonnades, and temples, so the new Soviet culture has already expressed itself in a new type of architecture in, for instance, the University Building in Moscow and a range of people's palaces, which find their lesser imitations from Eastern Germany to China. Just as Hitler's neurotic and mesmeric oratory called for mass rallies, spectacular parades, and the maximum recourse to propaganda, so the modern emphasis on size, flashiness, and progress is partly expressed in demonstrations, mass eurhythmics in stadiums, and huge passive audiences. In India, more gently, it has been noted that the Hindu revival, determined to revert to a pre-Muslim architectural inspiration, is gradually forgoing the use of arch or dome, and is reintroducing the ancient trabeation design. So we conclude that the impact of a just-discernible rising culture, though slow to show itself, may yet be counted as a factor within the perspective. It is an aspect of

prestige, and a blending of nationalism, idealism and religion, which we have already considered in separate chapters.

Sartorial fashions are yet another indication of a nation's turning to East or West, to tradition or experiment. Distinctive headgear can represent an appropriate party allegiance. An Arab would have no more wish to wear Congress dress than a Hindu wear a *keffiyeh*. The Pakistani man of affairs will be smart and at ease in Western attire, as will his opposite number in Bangkok, Singapore, Djakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Saigon, Manila, and Rangoon. Yet others, following a lead set by certain heads of state and symbolizing the sober fact of a struggle hard-won, will prefer to wear a simple, almost austere boiler suit or cassock attire, which conveys an immediate impression of unsophisticated dignity and practical good sense.

The women-folk are quite another matter. In a cosmopolitan city like Bangkok, for instance, the younger women are almost uniform in white blouses and neat, dark skirts, very becoming, retaining the natural charm and dignity, and eminently sensible to work in. But in India, Burma, and Ceylon traditional feminine dress has not capitulated so easily to the invasion of Western fashion, and many women are still essentially Eastern in costume, bearing, and outlook. In an international age, the clash is inevitable.

The last factor in the perspective is the haunting awareness of China, geographically outside the scope of this short survey, but psychologically never far away. Looming large on the mental horizon is the uncertain intention of the Peking Government. For nearly ten years, 1949-59, the outside world had no option but to accept that what China did within her own confines was legitimately her own concern. To reshape China in a Communist mould was thought to be a generation's task in any case, and the dragon would be too busy at home to spit fire for the present. But the dragon turned into a colossus of fantastic strength and commanding great armies. Apart from participation in Korea, intimidating Taiwan (Formosa), shelling the off-shore islands, and breathing discipline into the nation, what was the purpose of such large armies? Most apprehensions were soothed away by the cordiality and reassurances of Chou En-lai, China's constant diplomatic reiteration of the Five Principles (*Panchsila*) and the doctrine of peaceful coexistence. Then came the startling news of the Khamba rebellion, the insurrection in Tibet, the flight of the Dalai Lama to India, the setting up of the Panchen Lama as supreme Buddhist authority in Tibet, and stories of violence and harsh suppression. The whole of South and South-East Asia recoiled with alarm, pondering the consequences

and the future. What made the overrunning of Tibet so doubly awesome was the fact that it was military annexation. The settlement of 1954, governing the rights of China and India in Tibet, had been followed by the establishing of Tibet as an autonomous region in April 1956 in the presence of the Chinese Deputy Prime Minister, Marshal Chen Yi. Why, then, the invasion of 1959? Was China so desperately in need of emigration areas and anxious to re-settle millions from other parts of China? Was it to develop Tibet, increase food supplies, put pressure on neighbours to the south, proclaim her strength, and even give her partner, Russia, something to think about? It has achieved all these. Furthermore, before South Asia had fully recovered from the shock and surprise, China went a stage further and laid claim to frontier areas in Kashmir and along the north-eastern border of India. The occupation of Tibet was almost forgotten as the border disputes raged. Memories began to revive of Vietminh forces in Laos in 1952; of border friction with Burma over the years; of Indonesia's trouble with her Chinese minority; and countless other pinpricks and trouble-spots. But far and away the most disturbing was the lightning success of the Tibet affair, and the vivid memory of this is a sober factor in the present perspective.

In partial retaliation, the Communist Government in the south Indian State of Kerala was ousted from office, and the state came under Governor's rule. At the next elections, in February 1960, the Communist Party lost heavily in seats (a drop from sixty to twenty-six), while the Congress Party increased their representation from forty-two to sixty-three. Nevertheless, the plain fact remains that Communism in South Asia, so far from being of no account, is a persistent cause for anxiety in almost every country.

CHAPTER 14

Prospects

In this final chapter we dare to look into the future and try to assess the possible pattern that may emerge in South Asia. As we defined it earlier, we will be concerned with 'the longer-term view, with expectations and straws in the wind'. Seven headings will suffice to cover the essentials: each country will strive for a sharper identity, backed by greater stability and prestige; democracy will continue as a method of government longer than some suppose; economic pressures, especially in the development of raw materials, search for markets, and the movement of populations, will increase formidably; Communism's bid for influence and power will continue undeterred by setbacks; China's overtowering stature as the modern colossus will cast a long shadow; the new nations will show certain tendencies to revert to type; and, lastly, a new cultural impetus will arise, which should eventually produce something approaching a renaissance in mind and manners and style, though this may be long-delayed.

*

Nations take time to acquire personality, but the fact that the new nations of South Asia have held their frontiers and consolidated their independence so successfully augurs well for the future of most of them. Nationalism, as a force, has triumphed over many a disruptive influence, and the gradual movement towards social and political stability has advanced the sense of prestige. Professor Arnold Toynbee, lecturing in New Delhi in 1960, decried nationalism as 'man's chief obstacle to world unity', and 'mankind's enemy No. 1 in the current chapter of the world's history', but it is precisely the awareness of being a nation that gives meaning to endeavour and leads to increasing maturity. To believe in nationalism is not to belittle wider allegiances. India, Burma, Ceylon, Pakistan, and Malaya, for example, would never have developed their in-

dividuality or personality apart from nationalism, and yet, with the single exception of Burma, these very countries have remained members of the Commonwealth. Even when countries have changed their status from dominion to republic, the bond of partnership within the Commonwealth has still held. The prospect is that this will continue, and the Commonwealth, as a free association of nations, with certain common factors of history and sentiment, may have an increasingly vital role to play in the next few decades. It is one of the worldwide agencies through which Asian statesmen will long exercise their influence on a par with their Western colleagues.

Inevitably, the Commonwealth allegiance will be suspect to those outside it who do not appreciate its true value. Indeed, attacks on the Commonwealth may be expected to increase, though they are not likely to meet with much success. S.E.A.T.O. is in a different case, and has a limited function—vigilance against the spread of Communism. Its supporters can talk of ‘containing’ Communism, while Communists can complain of ‘encirclement’. Both are correct. S.E.A.T.O. is therefore, by its very nature, a first-aid measure, a military blockade, a political challenge to Communist expansionism. For that very reason, countries like India, with strong non-violent traditions, will continue to keep clear of involvement, while other nations, like Thailand and Pakistan, will accept all the help offered by such an organization. Not even a declaration of all-round disarmament and renunciation of war will eliminate the justification for S.E.A.T.O. Regional pacts are allowed for in the United Nations Charter, which gives S.E.A.T.O. further constitutional validity in the circumstances of political and ideological tension.

The second likelihood is the continuance of democracy as a system of government in a number of nations of South Asia. In a few it will be no more than lip-service to an ideal; in others it will operate as a satisfactory and fully-fledged system. India is still the model, in spite of the pessimists.

Dr. R. B. Ambedkar, a principal architect of India’s Constitution and leader of the depressed classes, once declared: ‘Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic’. But this has proved only half true. The autocratic rule of princes in the past has been so transmuted by party politics into Congress authority that the basis of responsibility has been democratized, and the political centre of gravity shifted without destroying the acceptance of authority. The transition has been remarkable. Parliamentary democracy in South Asia is experimental still, but virile, and, given the right conditions of gradual education, a sense of toleration and integrity at the top, there is

every reason why democracy should endure. Fake democracies will condemn themselves in time.

The third prospect is the economic outreach and uplift, which is likely to continue apace. Improved methods of production are bound to result in increased supplies of goods of all sorts, in agriculture, raw materials, machinery, fuel, and the like. This in turn will lead to market expansion, with enormous financial return. Material improvement will make possible greater investment, which will induce yet greater production. Pandit Nehru, outlining India's Third Five-year Plan in 1960, spoke of increasing the national income by at least 5 per cent. per annum; a total investment of Rs. 99,500 million, Rs. 59,500 million in the public sector, with a development outlay of Rs. 70,000 million, and Rs. 40,000 million in the private sector, which includes agriculture, small industry, and housing. The trend of industrial and agricultural development side by side in India is, in principle, repeated elsewhere, and the intricate problems of production, organization, and sales distribution are common to all concerned. Lack of capital will continue to hamper progress to some extent, and this explains why the wealthier nations of the world are so welcomed in South Asia when they suggest economic aid or hint at loans. But financial strength will accrue with industrial development, and 'the great leap forward', the 'catching up with the West', is well and truly in train. Another economic aspect which will continue to embarrass governments is growth of population and, in some cases, the need for emigration. Nothing so quickly leads to political friction as an unbalancing of stability by changing population pressures.

The fourth expectation is a renewed Communist bid for greater influence throughout South Asia. Lulls in the ideological conflict are either unreal or deliberate. Marxism aims at world revolution, and cannot be content with less. It will be argued that Communist intrusion in South Asia has receded, and that recent election results in Kerala, Burma, and Ceylon prove this. It can also be argued that economic competition has replaced political manoeuvring in the age of peaceful coexistence. But this is all part of the present strategy, a round of bluff in the opening stages of a contest scarcely begun. Communism has its agents, sympathizers, and cells, known and unknown, all over South Asia. Many are biding the time, and no one who has travelled about and moved freely at 'ground level' can have any doubt about it. Communist Party organization is normally efficient, closely-knit, and extremely opportunist, capitalizing the slightest opening or good fortune, and exposing every weakness in the opponent. The hierarchical strength and ruthless-

ness of Communism is notorious, and shows up the slower tempo and greater consideration for others in South Asia in striking contrast. Thus, when Mr. Khrushchev exclaimed on landing in Djakarta in 1960 that what Indonesia needed was organization he insulted a proud nation on arrival, and implied his own vast superiority in this respect. The remark amounted to saying that incompetence abounded, and that Russia would be willing to supply expert advisers to put matters to rights. But by then South Asia was wide awake to the probing strength of Communism. Terrorism in South-East Asia, trade exhibitions from China and Russia, books from the Communist world, diplomatic overtures, invitations to peace conferences and the like were all straws in the wind radiating from either Peking or Moscow, and such moves are likely to increase.

The theories of Communism, however, might not be so alarming were it not for the fact that standing on the borders of South Asia is the massive form of China. Even a book on South Asia has to end with reference to the proximity of Communist China, and the apprehensions that accompany that thought. China's newfound strength is the most awe-inspiring factor in Asia at the moment, and is bound to remain so in any long-term view.

In the preamble to the New Constitution, publicized on 1st July 1954, China could already boast:

In the past few years our people have successfully reformed the land system, resisted U.S. aggression and aided Korea, suppressed the counter-revolutionaries, rehabilitated the national economy and carried out other large-scale struggles which have provided the conditions necessary for planned economic construction and the steady transition to Socialism.

The achievements of the Peking Government are so dramatic and the new lease of life in China so spectacular and beyond question that many in Asia admire the leaders that inspire the programme, and look to China as a model of what can be done. Many 'overseas' Chinese in particular respect a 'home' Government that goes out of its way to say in its Constitution:

The People's Republic of China protects the proper rights and interests of Chinese resident abroad (Article 98).

With this pledge of protection, the long arm of China reaches everywhere, and even Chinese not in sympathy with Communism are left with the feeling that they are welcome 'home', always in mind, or marked down as dissident. The psychological effect and pull is extraordinarily powerful.

The very next clause in the Constitution offers a wide invitation to all who think themselves misunderstood, aggrieved, or hounded about, and who are looking for a new hope or a new land to live in. It reads:

The People's Republic of China grants asylum to *any* foreign national persecuted for supporting a just cause, for taking part in the peace movement, or for scientific activities (Article 99).

Here is the way of escape for any frustrated idealist or mal-content, an invitation to shelter under the benign care of a 'progressive' government. Nor is this claim to progress to be lightly cast aside. Socially as well as economically, agriculturally, and industrially, China has completed a fantastic revolution in outlook and behaviour. To give but one example—concerning the status of women—the Marriage Law promulgated by the Central People's Government on 1st May 1950 begins as follows:

MARRIAGE LAW

Article 1. The arbitrary and compulsory feudal marriage system, which is based on the superiority of man over woman and which ignores the children's interests, is abolished.

The New Democratic marriage system, which is based on free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on protection of the lawful interests of women and children, shall be put into effect.

Article 2. Polygamy, concubinage, child-betrothal, interference with the remarriage of widows, and the exaction of money and gifts in connection with marriage shall be prohibited.

These articles summarize most of the legal rights for which women in many Asian countries have been fighting for years, and in some cases are still fighting for. Thus China stands out again as the model nation, thoroughly up-to-date in regarding marriage as a partnership. Inevitably, the predominantly Muslim nations, such as Indonesia, Malaya, and Pakistan, have found it difficult to move fast in legislating for a change in the marriage relationship. China has gone right ahead uninhibited, with a far more secular instinct, and deems this part of the 'scientific' attitude to life.

It is in matters like these that Communism gives clear and simple direction, and enforces the decrees with discipline. Thus Communism has the attraction for some of being very much a 'known

quantity', with a programme that sounds 'progressive' and clearly showing results. The appeal is flung wide and far.

But even this shadow of China across South Asia will not be the last word in the coming years. Two other tendencies are in operation.

One is the principle of 'reversion to type', not to be confused with nationalism, which has certain common characteristics. Customs and traditions which have been the very life of South Asia are beginning to reassert themselves, and are likely to continue to do so. They include matters of dress and address, superstitions and festivals, matters of idiom and form, even to the search for national languages. 'Reversion to type' is a reassertion of the past, but it comes justly under the heading 'prospects' because it is part of a process which is evolving steadily and is now coming into spate. India looks back with pride to the age of Asoka, a golden age in Indian history, and yearns for a parallel greatness, a reversion to type, but in the future. China may be thinking in terms of a reach of power which would foreshorten the range of Kublai Khan and his far-flung exploits. History stimulates the imagination, and induces men of today to emulate yesterday and prepare for an even better tomorrow. Each country will go its own way. Thus China is reverting into a highly disciplined and regulated society, one of the most powerful bureaucracies history has ever known, and this is true to China's authoritarian tradition. Confucius aimed at developing a type of public official, steeped in the art and wisdom of government, who would rule the masses. The Communist Party system fits easily into this tradition. The mould is ready-made. 'The people may be made to comply, but cannot be made to understand', explained Confucius. Again: 'Those not in office should not meddle with the government.' Therein lies the self-justification of totalitarianism.

In direct contrast is the spirit of large areas of South Asia, a spirit more unfettered, individual, and contemplative, a freer spirit altogether, nurtured and disciplined by religion and tradition, and usually more tolerant of diversity. Time alone will prove how shallow or deep is the impact of awakened Hinduism and Buddhism, just as time alone will demonstrate how lasting is the new allegiance to State and society in China as against loyalty to family and ancestry.

Lastly, we come to the possibilities of cultural change. Four centuries ago in Europe the growth of nationalism was accompanied by the Renaissance and Reformation. In Asia the process may be in the same direction. The new learning is unquestionably with us

—new universities, techniques, outlooks, and thirsts. Cultural styles and substances will be expressed increasingly in literature, theatre, music, art, fashion, and form. The culture may reflect the progress and achievements of the new nations, and in some cases must praise the powers-that-be, and urge loyalty on the populations. In South-East Asia some of the most successful Communist propaganda, for example, is expressed in song and dancing—the Chinese *Yangko* dance, with banners showing the Picasso dove of peace. Culture in Indonesia is essentially artistic and is holding its own against ‘materialism’.

As for the possibilities of reformation, the spirit of enquiry is active again, sacred scriptures have been, and are being, subjected to a theological re-examination and pruned of a few obscurantisms. Science has invaded theology in the role of archaeology, textual criticism, and the comparison of religions. But these devastating attacks and analyses have served rather to confirm than destroy the basic assumptions and criteria of religion. Islam claims to have broken surface with new vigour in parts of the Middle East and North Africa, and the impact of this may be felt in South Asia. Meanwhile, Christianity, while severely persecuted in one area, is spreading and rooting in another. Thus the awakening in South Asia is a total experience, spiritual and intellectual as well as political, and could crystallize in time into something cultural. We may be well beyond the dawn.

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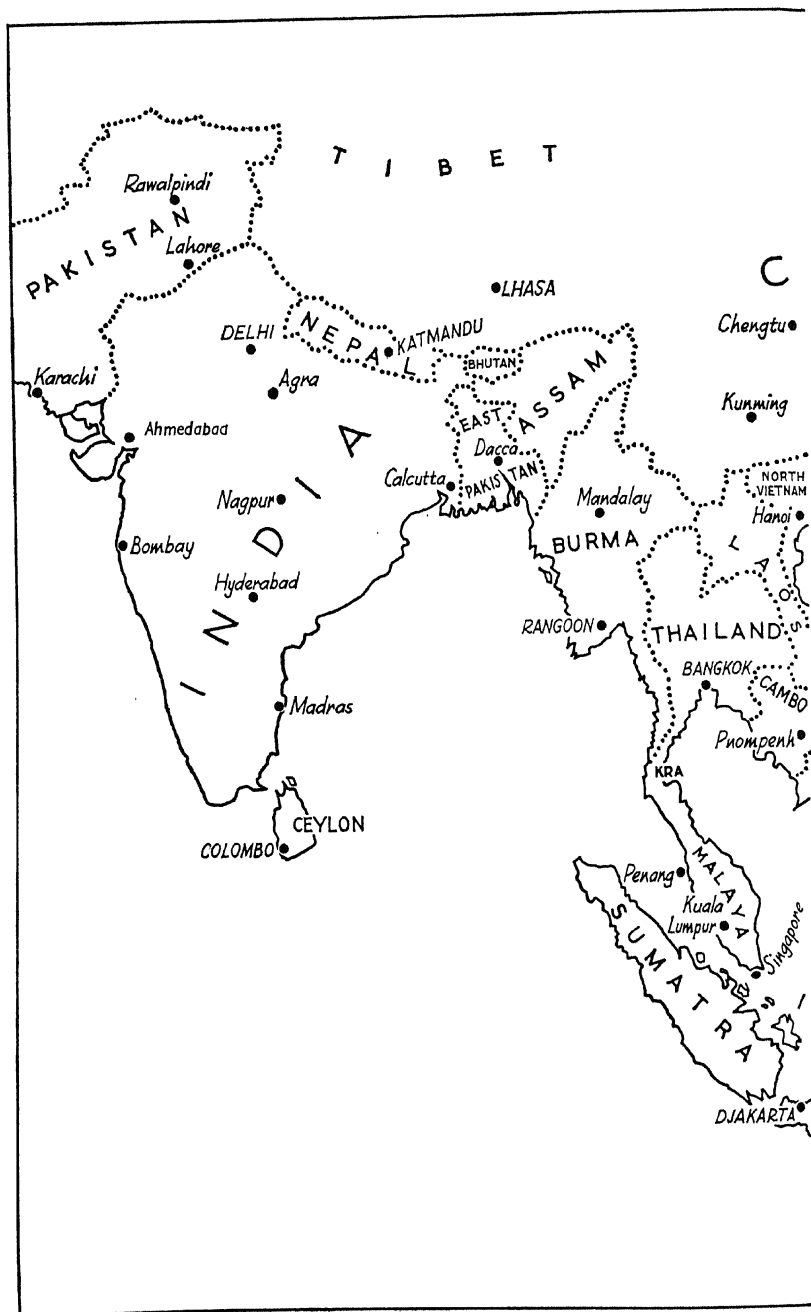
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the strongest of the four in the Asian setting.

What of the future? Will democracy and the Commonwealth allegiance survive?

Vast economic growth, Ian Thomson thinks, can be confidently foretold, as can renewed Communist bids for influence.

The spectacular achievements of the Peking Government and their attraction for striving nations, are underlined. Against this is set the principle of 'reversion to type'—the resurgence of old customs and traditions, part and parcel of nationalism, and the power of the liberal spirit, strengthened by the old religions.

Ian Thomson sees beyond the changing patterns, and his acute analysis of the Asian mind will hold good for a long time to come.

Born in China in 1912 of a family which has given eighty years of devoted public service in the Far East, Ian Thomson read history at Balliol College, Oxford, and was subsequently tutor at Hertford College. Since 1934 he has constantly visited and re-visited the Middle and Far East. In 1958 he toured through Pakistan, India, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia and Ceylon; had discussions with cabinet ministers, diplomats, trade unionists, business men and religious leaders, and attended an Afro-Asian conference on education.

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